

NATHAN THE WISE  
A DRAMATIC POEM IN FIVE ACTS  
BY  
GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

## PERSONS

SULTAN SALADIN.

SITTAH, his sister.

NATHAN, a rich Jew in Jerusalem.

RECHA, his adopted daughter.

DAJA, a Christian, but in the house  
of the Jew as companion to Recha.

A young Knight Templar.

A Dervish.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem.

A Friar.

An Emir, with various Mamelukes of Saladin.

## ACT I—SCENE I

SCENE : *Apartment in Nathan's house*

*Nathan returning from a journey. To him Daja*

*Daja.* 'Tis he ! 'tis Nathan ! Now may God be praised  
That you at last, at last return again.

*Nathan.* Yes, Daja ; God be praised ! But why *at last* ?  
Have I then hoped for earlier home-coming ?  
And was it in my power ? Think ! Babylon  
By such a road as I perforce must follow,  
Now left, now right, is from Jerusalem  
At least two hundred leagues ; and then my task,  
To gather in the debts the merchants owed me,  
Was scarce a business to make for speed,  
'Tis no such off-hand matter.

*Daja.* Nathan, Nathan,  
How wretched meanwhile all things might have been  
To greet you on return ! Your house. . . .

*Nathan.* On fire !  
So much I've heard already ; now God grant  
That this is all the evil I must hear of !

*Daja.* So near it was to burning to the ground.

*Nathan.* Then, Daja, we had built another house ;  
And one to suit us better.

*Daja.* True enough !  
Yet Recha by a hair's breadth only 'scaped  
Of burning with it.

*Nathan.* Burning ? Recha ? She ?  
*That* no one told me. Then indeed no house  
I should have wanted more. My Recha burned,  
Within a hair's breadth !—Ha ! she is, in truth !  
Has actually perished ! Say the word !  
Out with it ! Kill me, torture me no longer—  
Yes, yes, she was burned with it.

*Daja.* Were it so,  
Would it be from my lips that you would hear it ?

*Nathan.* Why do you fright me, then? O Recha mine!

My Recha!

*Daja.* Yours? Your Recha call you her?

*Nathan.* How should I ever disaccustom me

To call this child my own?

*Daja.* Do you name all

That you possess with only so much right

Your own?

*Nathan.* Nothing with greater! Everything

I else possess Nature and Fortune's grace

Rained down on me. This property alone

I owe to virtue.

*Daja.* At how dear a rate

You make me pay for your pure goodness, Nathan!

If goodness, with such purpose exercised,

Can be called goodness!

*Nathan.* Such a purpose, say you?

What, then?

*Daja.* My conscience . . .

*Nathan.* Daja, first of all,

Listen and hear me tell . . .

*Daja.* My conscience, I . . .

*Nathan.* What a rare stuff I bought in Babylon,

Tasteful and worthy of you, so rich and fine,

Even for Recha I scarce have brought a finer.

*Daja.* What use? For, Nathan, I must tell you freely

My conscience will no longer be deceived.

*Nathan.* And how the bracelets, and the golden chain,

The ear-rings and the brooch will pleasure you,

Which in Damascus booths I rummaged out;

Ask me to show them.

*Daja.* Ever 'twas your way!

Only at ease when giving costly gifts!

*Nathan.* Be you as glad to take as I to give—

Nor speak of them!

*Daja.* Nor speak! Nathan, who doubts

That you are honour's self, great-heartedness?

And yet . . .

*Nathan.* And yet—am but a Jew—is't not

What would you say?

*Daja.* Nathan, what I would say

You know far better.

*Nathan.* Well, no words



*Daja.* I'm dumb.

What God may see herein deserving doom

And which I cannot alter or prevent—

*Cannot*, I say—come on you !

*Nathan.* Come on me !—

But now where is she? Where lies hid? O *Daja*,

Are you deceiving me? Does she not know

That I am come?

*Daja.* That ask I you, her father !

The fright still quivers in her every nerve,

Whate'er her fancy shapes is only fire,

Nothing but fire. In sleep her spirit wakes,

And sleeps in waking ; now an animal,

And now more than an angel.

*Nathan.* Dear my child !

What are we human creatures !

*Daja.* Long she lay

This morning with closed eyes, and was as dead.

Sudden she started up and cried, " O hearken !

My father's camels come : I hear their tread,

I hear his gentle voice !"—as suddenly

Her eye grew dim again, and so her head,

Her arm's support withdrawn, dropped on the pillow.

I, out at gate ! and there beheld your face !

What wonder ! her whole soul was every hour

With you, with you alone—and him.

*Nathan.* With him?

What him?

*Daja.* With him who saved her from the fire.

*Nathan.* Saved her ! Who was he? Who? And where is he?

Who saved for me my *Recha*? Tell me, who?

*Daja.* 'Twas a young Templar Knight whom just before,

Brought here a prisoner, *Saladin* set free.

*Nathan.* A Templar ! What ! Whom *Saladin* let live?

And did no meaner miracle suffice

To save my *Recha*? God !

*Daja.* No. Without him

Venturing once more his new-won life, she perished !

*Nathan.* Where is he, *Daja*, this heroic man?

Where is he? Come and lead me to his feet.

But first you gave him, not reserving aught,

The treasure I had left you? Gave him all?

Promised him more—much more?

*Daja.*

Alas ! we could not.

*Nathan.* Not? Not?

*Daja.* He came, and no one knows from whence ;  
He went, no one knew whither. Without word,  
Led by his ear alone, with fore-spread mantle,  
Boldly through flame and smoke he sought the voice  
That called to us for help. We gave him lost,  
When suddenly from out the smoke and flame he stood,  
In his strong arm holding her high. Unmoved  
And cold before our sobbed-out thanks, he set  
His prize down gently, thrud the crowd, and vanished !

*Nathan.* Vanished ! But not for ever, I will hope.

*Daja.* When the first days were past we saw him go,  
Under the palm-trees walking up and down,  
Yonder, that shade the Holy Sepulchre.  
With trembling I approached him, spoke my thanks,  
Besought, entreated, conjured him but once  
To see the gentle girl who could not rest  
Until her thanks were wept out at his feet.

*Nathan.* Well?

*Daja.* Vain, in vain ! To our entreaty deaf,  
He poured even bitter mockery on me . . .

*Nathan.* Till you were frightened from him . . .

*Daja.* No, in truth !

For I assailed him every day anew ;  
And every day endured new mockery.  
What did I not bear from him ! What had not  
Willingly borne ! But many days now past  
He comes no more to seek the palm-trees' shade  
Girdling the quiet grave of the Redeemer ;  
And no man knows where now he lives retired—  
You are amazed ! You ponder !

*Nathan.* I but think

What feeling this in such a soul as Recha's  
Surely begets. To find herself disdained  
By one proven worthy of so high regard ;  
So driven away, and still to be so drawn ;  
A long contention sets of heart and head,  
Whether misanthropy shall win the day  
Or melancholy ; often neither wins,  
And fantasy that mixes in the strife  
Makes of us dreamers in whom, ill exchange !  
The head acts heart, and heart acts head by turns ;

The latter is, if I have not misread her,  
My Recha's case : she dreams.

*Daja.* She's dutiful,  
And all love-worthy !

*Nathan.* Still she dreams, she dreams !

*Daja.* One special crotchet—may we dare to call it?—  
She cherishes. 'Tis that her Templar Knight  
Can be no earthly creature, born of woman ;  
One of the angels rather, whose sweet guard  
She trusted in from her blest infancy,  
Flew from his veil wherein even in the fire  
He hovered round her, took the Templar's form  
To save her—do not smile ! Who knows ? who knows ?  
Even if we smile, we'll leave her this illusion  
In which the Jew, the Christian, and the Muslim  
Are joined in one—surely a blessed dream !

*Nathan.* Even to me 'tis blessed ! Go, brave Daja ;  
See what she does ; if I can speak with her—  
This wondrous angel-guardian then I'll find,  
And if it pleases him still here below  
To play the pilgrim, still his knightly part  
To fill, sure I shall find and bring him hither.

*Daja.* You undertake things harder than you know.

*Nathan.* Then the sweet dream to actuality  
More sweet will yield its place, for, trust me, Daja,  
To men a human creature is more dear  
Than any angel, so you will not grieve  
To see this angel-mania exorcised.

*Daja.* You are so good, and yet you are so wicked !  
I go—but listen, see !—here Recha comes.

## SCENE II

### *Recha, and the foregoing*

*Recha.* Home safe and sound, my father, home once more ?  
I feared 'twas but your voice sent to announce you.  
But come ; no hills, or wastes, or rivers part  
Us now ; we breathe within the self-same walls.  
Why haste you not your Recha to embrace ?  
Poor Recha ! who meanwhile was burned with fire,  
Almost, but almost only : Shudder not  
It is a horrid death, to die in fire !

*Nathan.* My child, my darling child !

*Recha.*

And you must over

Euphrates, Tigris, Jordan ; over who knows  
What waters ? O how often have I trembled

For you, before the fire came close to me !

Since then I think to die in water were

Refreshment, comfort, safety ; but in truth

You did not drown, nor did I die in fire—

Let us be glad and lift our heart to God.

He bore you and the vessel on the wings

Of His *invisible* angel-host across

The treacherous rivers. He too gave the sign

To my good angel that he *visibly*

On his white wing should bear me through the fire.

*Nathan.* (White wing ! Ah, yes, the Templar's fore-spread  
cloak.)

*Recha.* Visibly, visibly, should bear me through  
The scorching flame, safe covered by his wing ;  
Thus I have seen an angel face to face,  
And *my own* angel.

*Nathan.* Recha were worthy that,  
And would in him see nought more beautiful  
Than he in her.

*Recha* [*smiling*]. Whom flatter you, my Father ?  
The angel, or yourself ?

*Nathan.* Yet, had a man,  
Even such as Nature gives us every day,  
Done you this service, he must then appear  
To you an angel. Yea, he must and would.

*Recha.* No, not that kind of angel ; no ! a real,  
An actual angel he ! Have not yourself  
Taught me 'tis possible that angels are,  
That God for good to them that love Him can  
Work wonders ? And I love Him.

*Nathan.* He loves you,  
And works for such as you His hourly wonders ;  
Ay, has indeed from all eternity  
Wrought them.

*Recha.* I love to hear that doctrine.

*Nathan.*

How ?

That it would sound so natural, commonplace ;  
If a mere Knight had saved you, were it then  
Less miracle ? Chief miracle it is



That the true miracles become to us  
So commonplace, so everyday. Without  
This universal miracle could it be  
That thinking men should use the word like children,  
Who only gape and stare upon what's strange,  
And think what's newest is most wonderful.

*Daja.* [*To Nathan.*] O will you, Nathan, with such subtleties  
Break her now o'er-stretched brain?

*Nathan.* Hear me ! For Recha  
Were it not miracle enough to find  
Her saved by one whom first a miracle  
Must himself save? Yea, no small miracle !  
For what man ever heard that Saladin  
Spared a Knight Templar's blood? or such a Knight  
Did ever ask or hope that he should spare him,  
Or offered more for freedom than the belt  
Carrying his weapon, or at most his sword?

*Recha.* My father, that proves all, and argues clear  
It was no Templar, but the semblance only,  
For if no captive Templar ever came  
Into Jerusalem but to certain death;  
Nor any such was ever granted freedom  
To walk Jerusalem streets, then how could one  
Spring up at midnight for my rescue?

*Nathan.* See !

She argues well. You, Daja, answer her.  
You tell me he came here a prisoner;  
Then doubtless you know more.

*Daja.* Well, yes ; I know  
What common rumour says—that Saladin  
Showed mercy to him for his dear resemblance  
To a child-brother Saladin had loved.  
Yet as full twenty years have run their course  
Since the boy died—his name I know not what;  
He dwelt, I know not where—the story seems  
An idle tale strange and incredible !

*Nathan.* Nay, Daja, why were this incredible?  
Is it rejected only to make room  
For things less credible, as happens oft?  
Why should not Saladin, who loves his race,  
As all men know, have had in younger years  
A brother whom he specially beloved?  
Was 't never known two faces should be like?

Can an old passion not return again?  
Like causes, do they not work like effects?  
Since when? Tell me, what's here incredible?  
Ah, my wise Daja, it were then no more  
A miracle; *your* miracles alone,  
Demand, or shall I say deserve, belief?

*Daja.* You mock.

*Nathan.* But first you mocked at me. Yet, Recha,  
Even so your great deliverance remains  
A miracle and possible alone  
To Him who by weak threads can turn—His sport  
If not His mockery—the stern resolves  
And deep-laid plans of monarchs.

*Recha.* O my father!  
My father, if I err, you know I err  
Unwillingly.

*Nathan.* Nay, more, you wish to learn:  
But see! A brow so moulded or so arched;  
Bridge of a nose, this way or that way shaped;  
Eyebrows that on a blunt or sharper ridge  
Rest full or pencilled delicate, a line,  
A bend, a fold, an angle, or a mole,  
Or what else, on some Western countenance,  
And you escape the fire, in Asia!  
Were that no wonder, miracle-hungry folk?  
Why trouble, then, an angel?

*Daja.* Why, what harm—  
Nathan, if I may speak—what, after all,  
What harm to wish an angel for a saviour  
Rather than man? For so one feels the First  
Ineffable Cause of one's salvation drawn  
Much closer.

*Nathan.* Pride, mere pride! The iron pot  
Wants silver tongs to draw her from the furnace,  
That she may dream she's made of silver too.  
Pah! ask you what's the harm? Then, I would ask,  
What profit? "That's to feel God so much nearer"—  
Your thought—is folly, if not blasphemy.  
The thought is harmful, does the soul a mischief.  
Come, hear me for a moment. To this being  
Who saved you, be he angel or but man,  
Would you not render service in return  
With a glad heart, repaying what you might?

How then and what, if angel? What of service,  
Say what great service can you do for him?  
Thank him, you'll say, and sigh to him or pray,  
Dissolve in rapturous tears before him, fast,  
Give alms and celebrate his Festival.  
All nothing! For methinks thereby far more  
Yourself and your dear neighbours gain than he.  
Your fasting will not fatten him, your expense  
Not make him rich, nor will your rapturous worship  
Add to his glory, nor your faith in him  
Make him a mightier angel. Is't not so?  
But, if a human creature!

*Daja.* Certainly,  
I know a human creature's needs had given  
More opportunity to serve; God knows  
How ready we were for it! But he wished,  
He needed, nothing; in himself content,  
And with himself at peace as only angels  
Are or can be.

*Recha.* At last, when he quite vanished . . .

*Nathan.* Vanished! How mean you, vanished? Shown him-  
self

Under the palms no more? Then, did you make  
More eager search elsewhere?

*Daja.* We did not. No!

*Nathan.* No, Daja, no? But thereof may come sorrow!  
Fond dreamers! Should your angel now be sick?

*Recha.* Sick!

*Daja.* Sick! O say not so!

*Recha.* What shuddering  
Strikes my heart dead! Feel, Daja, this cold brow—  
So warm it was, and suddenly 'tis ice!

*Nathan.* He is a Frank, a stranger to our clime;  
He's young; unused to hunger and to vigil,  
And heavy labours laid upon him now.

*Recha.* Sick!

*Daja.* Nathan means only it were possible.

*Nathan.* Well, there he lies! Without a friend, or gold  
To buy friends for him.

*Recha.* Father, O this heart!

*Nathan.* No tendance, counsel none, nor friendly talk,  
The spoil of pain, perhaps of death, he lies!

*Recha.* Where? where?

*Nathan.* He who for one he had not seen  
Nor ever knew—enough, a fellow creature—  
Plunged in the fire . . .

*Daja.* O spare her, spare her, Nathan !

*Nathan.* Who would not nearer come or further know  
What he had saved, to spare himself the thanks.

*Daja.* O pity her, Nathan !

*Nathan.* Further, who desires not  
To see her more, unless again to save—  
Enough—a fellow creature.

*Daja.* Cease, and look !

*Nathan.* He on his bed of death, nor comfort hath  
But memory of this deed !

*Daja.* O Nathan, cease !  
You kill her !

*Nathan.* Him you killed, or might have killed.  
Recha ! My Recha ! this is medicine,  
Not poison that I bring. Come to yourself !  
He lives, mayhap is not even sick !

*Recha.* In truth ?  
Not dead ? Not sick ?

*Nathan.* Not dead ; for sure, not dead !  
For God rewards good deeds, even here rewards them.  
But come ! I need not teach you what you know :  
How easier far is dreaming pious dreams  
Than acting bravely ; how a worthless creature  
Will dream fine dreams, in order to escape—  
(Though oft his object's hidden from himself)—  
Some serviceable labour.

*Recha.* Ah, my father !  
Never again leave Recha to herself !  
May it not be that he is only gone  
Upon a journey ?

*Nathan.* Yes, without a doubt.  
I see, below, a Mussulman who scans  
With searching gaze my camels and their load.  
Who is he ? Know you him ?

*Daja.* It is your dervish.

*Nathan.* Who ?

*Daja.* Why, your chess-companion—your dervish !

*Nathan.* Al-Hafi ! my Al-Hafi ?

*Daja.* Purse-bearer  
To the Sultan now.



*Nathan.* Al-Hafi ! Are you dreaming?  
'Tis he ! in truth, 'tis he ! He comes this way—  
In with you, quick ! And now what shall I hear ?

## SCENE III

*Nathan and the Dervish*

*Dervish.* Do not be startled, open your eyes wide !

*Nathan.* Is't you ? Or is it not ? In silk attire,  
A dervish !

*Dervish.* Well, why not ? Can nought be made  
Out of a dervish, nothing ? Tell me why ?

*Nathan.* O much, no doubt ! But I have ever thought  
The true, the genuine dervish, would refuse  
To be aught else than dervish.

*Dervish.* By the prophet !  
That I'm no genuine dervish may be true.  
Yet when one must—

*Nathan.* What ! *must*—a dervish *must* ?  
No man needs must, and shall a dervish, then ?  
What must he ?

*Dervish.* What a true man asks of him  
And he sees clear is right ; that must a dervish !

*Nathan.* By Heaven, thou speak'st the truth. Come hither,  
man,

Let me embrace thee. Thou art still my friend ?

*Dervish.* Dost thou not ask first what I am become ?

*Nathan.* Despite what thou'rt become !

*Dervish.* But might I not  
Be now a fellow of State whose friendship were  
To thee inopportune, a burden ?

*Nathan.* If thy heart  
Is Dervish still, I'll trust it. For State office,  
That's but a garment !

*Dervish.* Which still must be regarded ;  
What think you ? Now advise me—at your court  
What should I be ?

*Nathan.* A Dervish, nothing more.  
Yet later, very probably, a cook.

*Dervish.* And thus with you unlearn my handicraft ?  
Just cook ! Not waiter also ? Now confess  
Saladin knows me better—I am made

His Keeper of the Treasure.

*Nathan.* Thou? By him?

*Dervish.* The smaller Treasure, be it understood;  
The chief, that of his House, his father guards.

*Nathan.* His House is large.

*Dervish.* And larger than thou thinkest.

For every beggar is a member of it.

*Nathan.* Yet Saladin so hates the beggar tribe—

*Dervish.* That root and branch he means to blot them out,  
Though in the attempt himself become a beggar.

*Nathan.* Bravo! That mean I; Saladin, well done!

*Dervish.* And beggar he is now, in spite of one!

For every sunset sees his treasury

Emptier than empty. For however full

The morning's flood, the ebb comes ere midday.

*Nathan.* By channels drained, alike impossible  
To fill or close.

*Dervish.* You hit the bull's eye there.

*Nathan.* I know it.

*Dervish.* Truly, it is little good for princes,  
Vultures to be among the carcasses;  
But ten times less when they are carcasses  
Among the vultures.

*Nathan.* Not yet that, my dervish.

Not that!

*Dervish.* Your speech is wisdom, sir. Now come  
What will you give to have my place from me?

*Nathan.* What does your place bring in?

*Dervish.* To me? Not much.

To you it would be wondrous profitable.

For were the Treasure at ebb, as oft it is—

Then you would raise your sluices; make advances

And take in usury whatever pleased you.

*Nathan.* With interest on interest again?

*Dervish.* Ev'n so!

*Nathan.* Until my capital were interest  
And nothing more.

*Dervish.* Is that no lure for you?

Divorce then, nothing else, is what remains

To us two friends and our past happiness!

For verily I reckoned much on you.

*Nathan.* Verily? Reckoned! How?

*Dervish.* That you would help me carry

My office with all honour, and offer me  
An ever-open treasury. You tremble.

*Nathan.* Well, let us understand each other. Here  
Is room for difference. Thou, my friend, art thou.  
Al-Hafi, dervish, to my uttermost  
Is welcome, but Al-Hafi, Saladin's  
Attorney—why, to him—

*Dervish.* Ah ! I guessed right.  
Thou would'st be kind if prudence should allow,  
Prudent and sage. But patience ! Thou would'st make  
Of one Al-Hafi two ; but presently  
Those two may separate. See this robe of honour  
Saladin gave me, look before it fades  
And turns to rags, such as may clothe a dervish,  
Hangs on a nail in old Jerusalem,  
And I am by the Ganges, where barefoot  
I lightly tread the hot sand with my teachers.

*Nathan.* That would be like you !

*Dervish.* And play chess with them.

*Nathan.* Your chiefest joy !

*Dervish.* Think only, what seduced me !  
That I should be no more a beggar, rather  
Might play the rich man 'mongst the beggars, might  
Perchance, hey presto ! change the richest beggar  
Into a poor rich man ?

*Nathan.* No, no ; not that !

*Dervish.* No, something more absurd ! For the first time  
Flattery trapped me, the good-hearted fancy  
Of Saladin it was that overcame me.

*Nathan.* What fancy ?

*Dervish.* " Only a beggar could interpret  
The soul of beggars, only a beggar learn  
How rightly to give alms. Your predecessor,"  
So said he, " was too cold by half, too rough ;  
When he did give, he gave ungraciously ;  
Blustered enquiry of the wretch he gave to ;  
Not satisfied to know the need, must learn  
First how the need arose, and then weighed out  
According to the cause, a stingy dole.  
But not so will Al-Hafi ! Nor in him  
Will Saladin appear unkindly kind.  
Al-Hafi is not as choked pipes that yield  
In mud and foam what they received so pure,

The limpid waters. No; Al-Hafi thinks,  
Al-Hafi feels as I do." Such the tune  
The fowler's pleasing pipe played in mine ear  
Till the bullfinch was netted. O a fool!  
Fool of a fool am I!

*Nathan.* Gently, my Dervish,  
Gently!

*Dervish.* Eh, what! Were it not foolery  
To tread men underfoot by scores of thousands,  
Starve, rob, enslave, lash, stab and crucify them,  
Then to a handful play philanthropist?  
Were it not foolery to ape the mercy  
Of the All-Highest, Who sends sun and rain  
Alike upon the evil and the good,  
On wilderness and pasture, to ape this  
And not to have the overflowing riches  
Of the Almighty? What! were it not folly. . . .

*Nathan.* No more, Al-Hafi, cease!

*Dervish.* Nay, of my share  
In this wild folly let me question you.  
Were it not foolish in these fooleries  
To note the good side only, and be partner  
For the good's sake in folly? Answer me!

*Nathan.* Al-Hafi, ask you counsel? Hear it, then;  
Make haste, return into the wilderness!  
With men you might, dehumanised, forget,  
Unlearn to be a man.

*Dervish.* This fear I too.  
Farewell!

[Exit.

*Nathan.* What! what! so fast away? Dost then imagine  
The desert will take wings? Would he but wait  
And hearken to a friend! Ho! ho! Al-Hafi!  
He's gone; and I so wished to question him  
About our Templar. In all likelihood  
He knows him.

#### SCENE IV

*Enter Daja hastily. Nathan*

*Daja.* Nathan! Nathan!

*Nathan.* Well, how now?

*Daja.* He has appeared again! He has returned!



*Nathan.* Who, Daja? who has come again?

*Daja.* He! He!

*Nathan.* Well, he! But who? Why name him simply "he"?  
That's not becoming, even if he is an angel.

*Daja.* He's pacing up and down amongst the palms,  
And plucks as he goes by dates from the boughs.

*Nathan.* And eating?—and a Templar?

*Daja.* Why torment me?

Her eager looks through the close-column'd palms  
Divined him ere they saw, and fixedly  
Now follow him. She begs, beseeches you  
Without delay to seek him there. O hasten!  
She from her window casement will make sign  
Which way he turns, nearer or further off.  
Hasten!

*Nathan.* What, travel-stained, just as I lighted  
From off the camel? Were that well? Go thou  
In haste to him; tell him of my return.  
For think, the worthy man has but declined  
Entering my doors in absence of the host,  
And will come readily when he invites him.  
Go, tell him I invite him heartily.

*Daja.* Utterly vain! He will not; one word says it—  
He darkens not the door of any Jew.

*Nathan.* Then go, if nothing more, to follow him:  
Keep him in sight; your eyes accompany him.  
I follow straight.

[*Nathan goes in, and Daja out.*]

## SCENE V

SCENE: *An open space with palm-trees, amongst which the Templar walks up and down. A friar follows him at some distance on one side, seeming as if he would address him.*

*Templar.* He follows me as once before; and look,  
See how he peers behind his hands! Good brother,  
Should I perhaps say "Father"? Is it so?

*Friar.* "Brother," not more; lay-brother at your service.

*Templar.* Well, brother, if one self had anything!  
But, as God lives, I have not—

*Friar.* None the less  
Warm thanks, and God give thee a thousandfold  
What thou wouldst joy to give. The will, the will

Makes givers, not the gift. Neither for alms  
Was I sent after thee.

*Templar.* Yet, thou wert sent?

*Friar.* Yes, from the cloister.

*Templar.* Where I even now  
Had hoped to find a simple pilgrim-meal?

*Friar.* The table was already laid; come only,  
Come back, my lord, with me.

*Templar.* Whither? And why?  
I have not eaten flesh for many a day;  
What matters it? I find the dates are ripe.

*Friar.* Nay, let my lord beware of this cold fruit.  
Unwholesome, for it much obstructs the spleen,  
Thickens the blood, brings melancholy thoughts.

*Templar.* I'm prone to melancholy and welcome it.  
But for this warning's sake you were not sent,  
I know, to seek me.

*Friar.* No; it was to learn  
Something about you, just to sound and probe you.

*Templar.* And this thou tell'st me boldly to my face?

*Friar.* Why not?

*Templar.* [*Aside.*] Crafty brother! Has the cloister  
More of thy kind?

*Friar.* I know not, my good lord,  
I must obey.

*Templar.* And there, is it your custom  
To listen and obey and never question?

*Friar.* Were it obedience else, I ask my lord?

*Templar.* (How near simplicity will come to truth!)  
Confide, to me thou may'st, who is the man  
Would know me better; not yourself I'll swear.

*Friar.* Would it become me or advantage me?

*Templar.* Then whom becomes it or advantages,  
This eager prying?

*Friar.* Who's the inquisitor?  
The Patriarch, I must believe—he 'twas  
That sent me after you.

*Templar.* Knows he not, then, the red cross on white mantle?

*Friar.* Even to me 'tis known!

*Templar.* Well, Friar, listen;  
I am a Templar and a prisoner.  
Would you know more? Ta'en prisoner at Tebnin,  
The fort which in the last hour of the truce

We thought to scale and then to rush on Sidon.

Yet more? taken with twenty, me alone

Saladin spared; with this the Patriarch knows

All he need know, and more ev'n than he need.

*Friar.* But scarcely more than he knew yesterday.

He would learn, too, the reason why my lord

Was pardoned by the Sultan, and he only.

*Templar.* Do I myself know why? Already I knelt,

My mantle on the ground, and with bared neck

Waited the stroke, when with a searching look

Saladin springs towards me, gives a sign;

They raise me and unfetter; when to thank him

I turn, his cheek is wet with teardrops; dumb

He stands, dumb I; he leaves me there. And now

What this strange story means, there! that's a riddle

The Patriarch may guess at.

*Friar.* Thus he reads it—

That God for great things, great things has preserved you.

*Templar.* Yea, for great things indeed. To save from fire

A Jewish girl; to guide some curious pilgrims

To Sinai's mountain—great things truly!

*Friar.* "Great things"

Will come in time; meanwhile such trifles serve:

Perhaps the Patriarch himself has ready

Affairs of weightier import for my lord.

*Templar.* What, Friar! Mean you that? Has he said aught?

Whispered? Dropped hint?

*Friar.* Yea, not uncertainly;

Only my lord must first be probed to learn

Whether he's just the man.

*Templar.* Oh, merely probed!

(We'll see first how the probing goes!) Well, sir?

*Friar.* The short way is the best way—that my lord

Be told in plain terms what the Patriarch wills.

*Templar.* Speak out then plainly.

*Friar.* It would please him much

If by my lord into the proper hands

A letter might be brought.

*Templar.* By me? By me?

I am no errand-runner. And was this

The business planned, an employment worthier

Than snatching Jewish maiden from the flames?

*Friar.* Yea, and with reason. For, the Patriarch says,

That with this missive's import is bound up  
Christendom's fortune. Says the Patriarch,  
"Carry this letter safe, and earn a crown  
Which by and by the King of Heaven will give,  
A crown none," says the Patriarch, "is worthier  
To wear than thou."

*Templar.* None worthier than I?

*Friar.* "For," says the Patriarch, "no man on earth  
Can win this crown more certainly."

*Templar.* Than I?

*Friar.* "He hath full freedom here, goes everywhere,  
Well understands how cities may be stormed  
And how defended"—says the Patriarch—  
"He best can judge the weakness or the strength  
Of that new-built inner battlement  
Of Saladin and plainliest describe it"—  
So says the Patriarch—"to the host of God."

*Templar.* Good friar, were it right that I should hear  
The content and the intent of the letter?

*Friar.* That know I not in its entirety.

'Tis for King Philipp's hands. The Patriarch—  
Often I wonder how a saint who else  
Lives wholly in Heaven can stoop and condescend  
To be so intimate with things o' the world.  
For they must vex his soul.

*Templar.* Well, then, the Patriarch?

*Friar.* Knows with exactest certainty how, where,  
And in what strength and from what quarter Saladin,  
In case the truce be broken and strife renewed,  
Opens afresh his campaign.

*Templar.* This he knows?

*Friar.* Yea, would be glad King Philipp also knew,  
That, with this knowledge fortified, the King  
Might judge the risk, whether so terrible  
That at all costs the truce must be renewed  
With Saladin, the truce your Order bravely  
Hath broken already.

*Templar.* What a Patriarch!

The dear man wants no common messenger  
In me; he wants a spy. Well, good friar,  
Tell this your Patriarch: that when you probed me  
You found me useless; that I hold myself  
A prisoner still; and more, that the one calling



Of Templars ever was to drive the foe  
With naked spear, never—to play the spy.

*Friar.* I thought as much ! and will not blame my lord.

The best is yet to come. The Patriarch  
Lately has gathered how the hold is named,  
And where it lies in Lebanon, wherein  
The untold sums are hid that Saladin's  
Provident father stores to pay the army  
And face the war's expense. Now, Saladin  
From time to time to this stronghold resorts  
By ways remote, with meagre company ;  
Perceiv'st thou ?

*Templar.* No, not I.

*Friar.* A simple thing  
To ambush then the Sultan, take him captive,  
And give him his quietus ; what were easier ?  
You shudder ? Two God-fearing Maronites  
Offer the deed, if once some gallant man  
Were found to guide them.

*Templar.* And the Patriarch  
Has chosen me to act the gallant man ?

*Friar.* He thinks King Philipp then from Ptolemais  
Would surely send his aid.

*Templar.* Friar ! To me ?  
To me ? Hast thou not heard, or hear'st thou now  
For the first time what debt of obligation  
Binds me to Saladin ?

*Friar.* I've heard the tale.

*Templar.* And still ?

*Friar.* The Patriarch thinks that's well enough,  
But God's rights and your Order . . .

*Templar.* These change nothing !  
Suggest me not a knave's trick.

*Friar.* No, good faith !  
Only the Patriarch thinks a knavish trick  
In man's sight needeth not be so in God's.

*Templar.* That I might owe my life to Saladin,  
And yet take his ?

*Friar.* O fie ! The Patriarch thinks  
That Saladin were still a foe to Christ,  
Therefore can have no claim to be your friend.

*Templar.* Friend ? Since I will not play the villain to him,  
The thankless villain ?

*Friar.* Why, of course, of course !

The Patriarch's mind is, we are quit of thanks,  
Quit before God and man, when service done  
Was not for our sake done, and rumour tells,  
Saladin spared you for that he discerned  
His brother's likeness in your look and ways.

*Templar.* Ah, this too knows the Patriarch, and still?

Would it were true ! Ah, Sultan Saladin !  
How ? Nature framed in me one feature only  
After your brother's pattern, should not then  
Something within me answer to the same ?  
And shall this something in my soul be shifted  
To please a Patriarch ? No, Nature, no !  
Thou dost not lie ! God does not contradict  
Himself in His own works ! Hence, friar, hence !  
Wake not my anger ; leave me to my thoughts.

*Friar.* I go ; and I go happier than I came.

My lord will pardon me. We cloister people  
Are under rule, we must obey the heads.

#### SCENE VI

*The Templar and Daja, who has been observing the Templar at a distance for some time, and now approaches him.*

*Daja.* The friar, methinks, left him in no good humour.

But I must chance my errand.

*Templar.* Excellent !

Who says the proverb lies—that monk and woman,

Woman and monk, are Beelzebub's two claws ?

To-day he flings me from the one to the other.

*Daja.* What do I see ? You, my brave knight ? Thank God !

I thank Him for His grace ! So long a time

You have been hidden. You have not been, I'll hope,

Retired in sickness ?

*Templar.* No.

*Daja.* In health, then ?

*Templar.* Yes.

*Daja.* We have been deep in trouble for your sake.

*Templar.* So ?

*Daja.* Surely wert on a journey ?

*Templar.* You have guessed it !

*Daja.* And art to-day returned ?

*Templar.* No ; yesterday.

*Daja.* To-day, too, Recha's father is returned,  
And surely Recha now dare hope?

*Templar.* For what?

*Daja.* For what she prayed of you so often. Come ;  
Her father now himself most pressingly  
Invites you. He has come from Babylon,  
A train of richly-laden camels with him,  
And everything that's costliest in spices,  
Jewels and stuffs that only India,  
Persia and Syria or China can provide.

*Templar.* I'm not a buyer.

*Daja.* He's honoured of his people.  
As princes are, and yet, I wonder often  
Their title of honour is "Nathan the Wise,"  
And not "Nathan the Rich."

*Templar.* Ah ! to his people  
Are *rich* and *wise* perhaps identical.

*Daja.* Rather "the Good" should they have named him. For  
It's not expressible how good he is.  
That moment when he learned what Recha owed you  
What would he not have done for you, or given !

*Templar.* Ay !

*Daja.* But try, but come and see !

*Templar.* What then ? How fast  
A moment passes !

*Daja.* Think, were it not so,  
Were he not this good man, that I so long  
Had dwelt within his gates ? Think you perhaps  
That I forget my worth as Christian ?  
O no, it was not sung beside my cradle  
That I should company my lawful spouse  
Only for this to Palestine, to tend  
A Jewish maiden. A noble squire my spouse  
In Kaiser Friedrick's host.

*Templar.* And was by birth  
A Swiss on whom the honour was bestowed  
With his Imperial Majesty to drown  
I' the self-same river-bed ; woman, how often  
Already have you told me this same tale ?  
Will you not cease at last, then, to pursue me ?

*Daja.* Pursue ? O gracious God !

*Templar.* Yes, yes, pursue.

And once for all I will not see you more,  
 Nor hear ! nor have recalled thus endlessly  
 A deed in which my thoughts had never part,  
 Which when I think of it becomes a riddle  
 Ev'n to myself. Regret it I must not—  
 But see, if such should hap again ; your fault  
 It were, if I should act less rashly, should  
 Enquire beforehand—and let burn, what would.

*Daja.* That, God forbid !

*Templar.* I beg you from to-day  
 Do me at least this favour : know me no longer.  
 For Jew is Jew. And keep the father off.  
 I'm a rough hind. Long since the maiden's image  
 Passed from my soul, if it was ever there.

*Daja.* Ah ! but from her soul yours hath never passed.

*Templar.* What, then, is one to do ? Say what.

*Daja.* Who knows !

Men are not always what they seem.

*Templar.* Yet seldom  
 Anything better. [*He turns to go.*]

*Daja.* But wait a moment. Why  
 This haste ?

*Templar.* Woman, these palms I loved and their green shade,  
 You make them hateful. [*Exit.*]

*Daja.* Go then, German bear !

Go ! Yet I follow, not to lose the trail.

[*Follows at a distance*]

## ACT II—SCENE I

SCENE : *The Sultan's Palace. Saladin and Sittah at chess.*

*Sittah.* Where now, where are you, Saladin ? You dream.

*Saladin.* I thought the move a good one.

*Sittah.* Good perhaps

For me ; but take it back.

*Saladin.* Why, then ?

*Sittah.* The knight

Is left uncovered.

*Saladin.* True. Well, then, so !

*Sittah.* That forks your pieces.

*Saladin.* Well, then, I call check !



*Sittah.* How does that help you? See, I cover it,  
And you are as you were.

*Saladin.* From this dilemma,  
I see no way but sacrifice. Let be!  
Take you the knight.

*Sittah.* I want him not; I pass.

*Saladin.* Thank you for nothing: better strategy  
Prompts you to leave the knight in place.

*Sittah.* May be.

*Saladin.* Make not your reckoning without the host.

See! Do you overlook what you would gain?

*Sittah.* By no means. For I could not think you held  
So lightly of your queen.

*Saladin.* I, of my queen?

*Sittah.* I see quite well to-day I shall not win

My thousand dinars—no, not even a heller.

*Saladin.* How so?

*Sittah.* Canst ask? Because with all your cunning  
And all your skill you mean to lose. But that  
I have no mind to, for besides such sport  
Is not quite entertaining, did I not ever  
Win most with you in games that I have lost?  
For then to comfort me for my lost game  
You gave me twice the stake.

*Saladin.* Then, sister dear,  
You should have tried with all your might to lose.

*Sittah.* It well may be, at least, your liberal hand,  
Dear brother, bears the blame if I play ill.

*Saladin.* We'll stop the game: 'tis late, we'll make an end.

*Sittah.* And leave it so? Then check! and double check!

*Saladin.* Truly I had no thought of such a check—

That takes my queen as well. . . .

*Sittah.* Could it be helped?

Let's see.

*Saladin.* No, no; I must resign the queen.

Never with this piece was I fortunate.

*Sittah.* With this piece only?

*Saladin.* Take it off?—No good!

For so all is protected as before.

*Sittah.* How courteously one must behave to queens

You've taught me often . . .

[*Lets it stand.*]

*Saladin.* Take it or take it not.

I have no move.

*Sittah.* But take, what need of that?

Check ! Check !

*Saladin.* Proceed.

*Sittah.* Well, check ! and check ! and check !

*Saladin.* And mate !

*Sittah.* Not quite ; for you can move that man Between, or make what move you will ; no matter.

*Saladin.* Right ! you have won : Al-Hafi straight will pay,  
Let him be called : Sittah, you guessed the truth ;  
My mind was not i' the game : I was distracted.  
Besides, who gives us aye these polished pieces  
Perpetually ? all smoothed away to nothing.  
What matter ? Losing needs excuse. But not  
The uniform'd pieces, Sittah, made me lose ;  
Your art, your swift and quiet glance . . .

*Sittah.* Even so

You try to soothe the smart of the lost game.

Enough ! you were distracted ; more than I.

*Saladin.* Than you ? What had you to distract you ?

*Sittah.* Truly

Not your distractions. O my Saladin,  
When shall we play so eagerly again ?

*Saladin.* All the more eagerly when occasion comes !  
Ah ! since the war resumes, you mean. Well, let it !  
On ! on ! I have not sought it. Willingly  
Had I prolonged anew our armistice, and gladly,  
How gladly first had found a manly spouse  
For my dear Sittah, and that were Richard's brother  
Brother of Richard, think !

*Sittah.* Your Richard's praise

Is ever on your lips !

*Saladin.* If brother Melek

Had, after, Richard's sister for his mate :

Ha ! what a house together ! Of the first,

Best houses in the world the best and first.

You find I am not slack in my self-praise,

Deeming me not unworthy of my friends—

Ah, 'spousals such as these would bring us men !

*Sittah.* Have I not often laughed at your fair dream ?

You know not Christians, nay, you will not know them.

Their pride is to be Christians, not to be men ;

For even that which from their Founder's day

Hath seasoned superstition—humanity—  
They love, not for its human quality,  
But that Christ taught it, that Christ did the like—  
Well for them that He was a man so good ;  
Well for them they can take in utter faith  
His virtues ! But what virtues ? Not His virtues,  
No, but His Name, which must be spread world-wide  
To cloud with slander and obliterate  
The names of all good men. The Name alone  
Is everything.

*Saladin.* Why else, you mean, should they require  
Both you and Melek take the name of Christian  
Ere Christians will permit you talk of marriage.

*Sittah.* Even so ! As if by Christians only love  
Were to be looked for, love wherewith the Maker  
Endowed woman and man.

*Saladin.* Christians believe  
So many pitiful things that they can swallow  
Even this ! And yet there you mistake. The Templars—  
They are the cause ; they, they alone by whom  
Our hopes are frustrate : they will not let go  
That pleasant town which should be brought to Melek  
By Richard's sister as her bridal dower ;  
They fix their claws on Acre. And not to lose  
The privilege of the knight, they play the monk,  
The simple monk. And thinking they may shoot  
A fortunate arrow at the bird in flight,  
They scarce can wait the passing of the truce.  
So be it ! I'm prepared. On, gentlemen !  
If all besides were only as it should be.

*Sittah.* Ah, what, then, troubles you ? What goes not straight ?  
What makes you tremble ?

*Saladin.* Even that which for so long  
Has made me tremble. I was in Lebanon—  
Our father, our good father, is succumbing  
To his sore burdens.

*Sittah.* O, 'tis pitiful !

*Saladin.* He can no more. 'Tis pressure everywhere ;  
Where'er we look is failure.

*Sittah.* What, then, fails ?

What presses ?

*Saladin.* What I almost scorn to name ;  
What when I have it seems superfluous,

And when I want it indispensable.  
 Where stays Al-Hafi? Have none gone after him?  
 This pitiful cursed money! Ha, Al-Hafi!  
 'Tis well that you are come.

## SCENE II

*The Dervish Al-Hafi. Saladin. Sittah*

*Al-Hafi.* Th' Egyptian moneys  
 Have now, methinks, arrived; and Allah grant  
 That they be in great plenty.

*Saladin.* Have you news?

*Al-Hafi.* I? No; I thought I should receive it here.

*Saladin.* To Sittah pay the stake—a thousand dinars  
*[Goes to and fro, in thought.]*

*Al-Hafi.* Pay! Pay! and not receive! O excellent!

Instead of something—less, still less than nothing.

To Sittah? evermore to Sittah? Lost?

And lost again at chess. And there's the board!

*Sittah.* You do not grudge me luck?

*Al-Hafi.* *[Examining the board.]* What grudge you?—If——  
 But you know all.

*Sittah.* *[Signing to him.]* Hush, Al-Hafi, hush!

*Al-Hafi.* *[Still examining the board.]* First grudge it not yourself.

*Sittah.* Al-Hafi, hush!

*Al-Hafi.* Were yours the white? Did you give check to him?

*Sittah.* Good that he did not hear!

*Al-Hafi.* Is it his move?

*Sittah.* Say out aloud that I can have my money.

*Al-Hafi.* Why, yes; you'll get it, as you always get it.

*Sittah.* How? Are you mad?

*Al-Hafi.* The game's not finished yet.

You have indeed not lost it, Saladin.

*Saladin.* *[Scarcely attending.]* Still, pay, my good Al-Hafi; we  
 must pay.

*Al-Hafi.* Pay! Pay! Your queen still stands.

*Saladin.* *[Still moody.]* It makes no odds,  
 The piece is taken.

*Sittah.* Have done, Al-Hafi, and say

That I can have my money when I please.

*Al-Hafi.* *[Still absorbed in the game.]* O that's of course, as  
 always—Yet even now



Even if the queen is taken, you are not therefore  
Check-mated . . .

*Saladin.* [*Steps up and throws the pieces down.*] Yes, I am, and  
wish it so.

*Al-Hafi.* I see, to play's to win; and payment follows.

*Saladin.* [*To Sittah.*] What says he? What?

*Sittah.* [*From time to time signing to Al-Hafi.*] You know him :  
how he loves

To oppose and be petitioned. Envious too,  
Or I mistake him.

*Saladin.* Surely not of you—

Not of my sister. What is this, my Hafi?  
Envious?

*Al-Hafi.* Maybe, maybe; gladly I'd have  
Myself a brain like hers, and such a heart.

*Sittah.* And yet he ever pays in honesty,  
And will to-day : leave him alone for that !  
But go, Al-Hafi, go ! Shortly I'll send  
To fetch the money.

*Al-Hafi.* No ; for further part  
In this mad mummery is not for me.

Sooner or later he must learn the truth.

*Saladin.* Learn? Who? and what?

*Sittah.* Is't thus you keep your promise,  
Al-Hafi? Break not oaths !

*Al-Hafi.* How could I think  
That it would go so far?

*Saladin.* Well ! What's in hand?  
Am I not to be told?

*Sittah.* I conjure you, Al-Hafi, be discreet.

*Saladin.* This is most strange ! This solemn, earnest prayer  
Speaks Sittah to a stranger, to a Dervish,  
And not to me, her brother. Solve the riddle,  
Al-Hafi, I command you. Speak out, Dervish !

*Sittah.* Let not a trifle, brother, trouble your spirit :  
More than its meanness warrants. Once or twice  
Of late, you know, I won from you at chess  
Just such a stake, and since I have no need  
At present for such moneys ; since, besides,  
Al-Hafi's treasure-chest is not too full,  
And posts have not arrived. But trouble not,  
For I'll not make it a present to you, brother.  
Not yet to Hafi or his treasure-chest.

*Al-Hafi.* Ah ! were it only that !

*Sittah.* And some such trifles.

That, too, 's untouched which once you set apart

For me ; for some few months untouched it lies.

*Al-Hafi.* That is not all.

*Saladin.* Not all ? Then will you tell me ?

*Al-Hafi.* Since we have waited for the gold from Egypt

Hath she . . .

*Sittah.* Why hear him ?

*Al-Hafi.* Hath she not only

Ta'en nothing . . .

*Saladin.* The good girl ! she has besides

Helped from her own. Is't so ?

*Al-Hafi.* Yea, all the court

She hath maintained, herself alone hath borne

Your whole expenditure.

*Saladin.* Ha ! that's my sister !

[*Embracing her.*]

*Sittah.* Who made me rich enough for this but you,

Brother ?

*Al-Hafi.* Who'll make you soon as beggar-poor

As he himself is.

*Saladin.* Poor ? the brother poor ?

When had I more ? or when have I had less ?

One coat, one sword, one charger, and—one God.

What want I more ? And when shall these come short ?

Yet, Hafi, I could chide you.

*Sittah.* Do not chide,

Brother ; if only I could lighten as much

Our father's burden—

*Saladin.* Ah ! Ah ! there you strike

My joy again to earth ! Though for myself

I nothing lack, nor can lack. Ha, 'tis he

Whose want is sorest, and with him we suffer.

What shall I do ? From Egypt our supplies

Delay their coming, we may wait them long,

And why, God knows : for all is quiet there.

Cut down, draw in, and spare—that will I gladly ;

Nothing will please me better, if alone

Thereby I suffer, and none else. What helps it ?

I still must have my horse, my coat, my sword.

And with my God 'tis easy bargaining.

For He is satisfied with one small gift,

Which is my soul.—Much I had reckoned, Hafi,  
Upon the surplus in thy treasure-chest.

*Al-Hafi.* Surplus? Yourself confess I had been strangled,  
Perhaps impaled had you in vain demanded  
Of bankrupt me this surplus. Fraud, embezzlement,  
Were then my one resource.

*Saladin.* Now, what remains?  
But tell me, Hafi, why you turn to Sittah  
And borrow her small store : are there not others?

*Sittah.* And could I see this privilege torn from me,  
To further you, my brother? No, this joy  
I'll not surrender till I must : my fortunes  
Are not yet foundered quite.

*Saladin.* Only not quite !  
It wanted only this ! Hafi, at once  
Contrive, take up from whom you can, nor halt  
On nice considering of means and ways :  
Go, borrow, pledge. Yet, Hafi, borrow not  
Of those whom I made rich. To borrow of them  
Might seem reclaiming. Ask the covetous,  
For they will be the readiest ; they know well  
How fast with me their moneys multiply.

*Al-Hafi.* I know none such.

*Sittah.* Hafi, did I not hear  
Your friend from his far journey had returned  
To his own dwelling?

*Al-Hafi.* Friend? My friend? To whom  
Give you that name?

*Sittah.* Your much-belauded Jew.

*Al-Hafi.* Belauded Jew ! Lauded by me?

*Sittah.* Whom God—  
Such were the terms that once you used of him—  
Whom God of all the good things of this world,  
With least and greatest in abundancy  
Had crowned.

*Al-Hafi.* And said I so? What meant I then  
By that?

*Sittah.* The least was, Wealth ; the greatest, Wisdom.

*Al-Hafi.* How? Of a Jew? I said so of a Jew?

*Sittah.* What would you not have said of your good Nathan?

*Al-Hafi.* Oh ! 'tis of him ! of Nathan ! Has he truly  
At last returned again? If this be so,  
Surely his journey prospered. And 'tis true

The folk call him the Wise, call him the Rich.

*Sittah.* Yea, more than ever now he's called the Rich.

And the whole city hums of rarities,

The stuffs and jewels in his caravan.

*Al-Hafi.* So then it is the Rich has come again ;

And with him comes, who knows ? the Wise as well.

*Sittah.* What think you, Hafi ? Could not you approach him ?

*Al-Hafi.* For what, suppose you ? Not to borrow, surely ?

Ah, there you touch him ! Nathan lend ? His wisdom

Lies just in this : that he will lend to no man.

*Sittah.* That's not the picture once you drew of him.

*Al-Hafi.* To men in utmost need he lendeth goods—

But money ? money never ! Tho' for the rest

He's such a Jew as there be seldom found.

Has brains, knows how to live, can play good chess ;

But marks him out in bad points as in good

From other Jews. I warn you, reckon not

On him. 'Tis to the poor he gives ; to them

Even with open hand like Saladin,

If not so largely, with as good a will ;

Without respect of persons. Christian and Jew,

And Mussulman and Parsee, all is one

To him.

*Sittah.* And such a man . . .

*Saladin.* How comes it, then,

I have not known this man, nor heard his name ?

*Sittah.* Would he not lend to Saladin ? To him,

To him who only cares for others' wants,

Not for his own ?

*Al-Hafi.* Herein you see the Jew,

The common, vulgar Jew ! And yet, believe me,

He envies you the most on score of giving,

So jealous is he ; grasping, for himself,

At all God's-hire that offers in the world ;

And 'tis for this alone he lends to none :

That he have more to give. His reason, this !

That Charity is in the law commanded,

The law commands not to oblige a neighbour ;

So Charity itself has made him quite

The least obliging friend in all the world.

In truth, of late I am in ill accord

With him. Still, think not therefore I will speak



Unjustly of him, good and true-hearted he,  
Everyway good, except for only this.  
No, not for this. I'll go at once and knock  
At other doors . . . and I have just bethought me  
Of a rich Moor, a covetous man—I go !

*Sittah.* Hafi, what needs your haste?

*Saladin.*

O, let him ! Let him !

### SCENE III

*Sittah. Saladin*

*Sittah.* What haste he makes, as though he were rejoiced  
If he could so escape me. What means that?  
Has he in truth deceived himself in Nathan,  
Or would perhaps deceive us?

*Saladin.* How deceive?

You question me who hardly know of whom  
The talk was, me who never heard until to-day  
Of this your Jew, your Nathan.

*Sittah.* Is it possible

A man remained hid from you who, they say  
Has found the graves of David and Solomon,  
And with a mighty secret word can break  
Their seals? and then bring forth from time to time  
To daylight treasures inexhaustible  
No meaner source could furnish.

*Saladin.* His wealth if this man finds in graves, 'tis sure  
They're not the graves of Solomon and David.  
Fools lie there buried !

*Sittah.* Criminals, mayhap !

Besides, his wealth's source is more fertile far,  
More inexhaustible than any grave  
Of Mammon.

*Saladin.* He's a merchant, so you told me.

*Sittah.* All highways are his mule-tracks, every waste  
Has seen his caravans, his vessels lie  
In all the havens. So Al-Hafi to me once  
Declared, and added, with a joyful pride  
How greatly, nobly this his friend employed  
What in his wisdom he did not disdain  
To gather by his diligence ; and added, too,  
How free from prejudice his soul, how open

His heart to every virtue, how attuned  
To all things beautiful. Ah ! how he praised him.

*Saladin.* Yet Hafi spoke of him uncertainly,  
And coldly . . .

*Sittah.* No, not coldly, but perplexed.

As though he held it dangerous to praise him,  
And could not blame him undeservedly.

Or might it not be that the noblest Jew

Cannot deny his kindred, is still Jew ;

That Hafi for this feature is ashamed

Of his dear friend ? Be't with him as it may,

The Jew be more Jew or be less, what matter

If only rich ? This is enough for us !

*Saladin.* And yet you would not, sister, take from him  
By force what is his own ?

*Sittah.* What call you force ?

With fire and sword ? No, no, what violence

But their own weakness need we with the weak ?

But come a moment now into my harem

And hear a singer-girl whom yesterday

I bought. Meantime perhaps a shrewd design

I have upon this Nathan will grow ripe—

Come.

#### SCENE IV

*In front of Nathan's house, where it is close to the palm trees.*

*Enter Recha and Nathan. To them Daja*

*Recha.* O, you've tarried long, my father. Hardly now  
Can we have hope to meet him . . .

*Nathan.* Never fear ;

If not among the palms, then elsewhere

We find him. Only calm yourself. And see,

Is that not Daja this way hastening ?

*Recha.* But she has lost him, that is all too certain.

*Nathan.* Why so ?

*Recha.* For then she'd come with speedier foot.

*Nathan.* She has not seen us yet, perhaps.

*Recha.* O now

She sees us.

*Nathan.* Look ! with quicken'd pace she comes.

Only be calm, be calm !

*Recha.* But could you wish  
A daughter who were calm in such a case?  
Untroubled for his weal whose great deed saved  
Her life—her life that's only dear to her  
Because to you she owes it.

*Nathan.* O my wish  
Is not to have you other than you are :  
Even if I knew that something new and strange  
Stirred in your loving heart.

*Recha.* What, then, my father?

*Nathan.* What ask you? Are you then so shy with me?  
What's passing now deep in your inmost soul  
Is innocence and nature. Let it not  
Trouble your spirit ; mine it does not trouble.  
But promise me that when your heart has spoken  
With clearer voice, you will not hide from me  
Your wishes.

*Recha.* Nay, the possibility  
Nigh makes me tremble—the thought that I might wish  
To veil my thoughts from you.

*Nathan.* No more of this.  
'Tis done with once for all. And here is Daja—  
Well?

*Daja.* Still he walks among the palms, and soon  
Will come by yonder hedge. Look, there he comes !

*Recha.* Ah ! and appears unsure which path to take.  
Whither? if right? if left? uphill or down?

*Daja.* No, no ; he'll take the footway round the cloister  
Yet once or twice, and then he needs must pass  
Hereby.—What matter?

*Recha.* Have you spoken with him  
Already? How is he to-day?

*Daja.* As ever.

*Nathan.* Carefully ! Warily ! Do not be seen.  
Step back a pace or two : Rather, go in.

*Recha.* Just one more look ! just one, but ah ! the hedge.  
It steals him from me.

*Daja.* Come ! the father's right.  
You run the danger that if he but sees you,  
Upon the spot he'll turn.

*Recha.* Ah me ! the hedge !

*Nathan.* If he turn suddenly by it, infallibly  
He'll spy you. So go in, go in.

*Daja.* Come, Recha;  
I know a window where we're safe.

*Recha.* So, Daja?  
[*The two go in.*]

## SCENE V

*Nathan and presently the Templar*

*Nathan.* Almost I shrink from this strange man. And almost  
His rugged virtues shake me. That one man  
Should thus be able to perplex another!  
He comes. By Heaven! A stripling like a man.  
I love right well this strong, defiant glance!  
And this brave carriage. Sure the shell alone  
Is bitter here, and not the kernel. Where,  
Where have I seen one like him? Pardon me,  
My noble Frank . . .

*Templar.* What say'st thou?

*Nathan.* Pardon me . . .

*Templar.* What, Jew? Why pardon?

*Nathan.* That I venture thus  
To greet you.

*Templar.* Can I hinder? But be brief.

*Nathan.* Forgive me. Pass not by so hastily  
And with so scornful brows; slight him not thus  
Whom you have bound to you eternally.

*Templar.* How bound? Ah, almost I guess! You are . . .

*Nathan.* My name is Nathan, am that maiden's father  
Whom your brave heart delivered from the fire;  
And come to . . .

*Templar.* If to thank me—spare your pains!

I have endured for this mere trifle's sake  
Too heavy a load of thanks. Assuredly  
You owe me nothing, nothing. Could I know  
This maiden was your daughter? 'Tis our rule,  
The Templars' duty, thus to run to the aid  
Of whomsoever in the hour of stress.  
Moreover, at that moment to my soul  
My life was burdensome. How gladly, then,  
I rushed to snatch the opportunity  
Thus for another's life to chance my own,  
Another's, were it but a Jewish girl.

*Nathan.* Yes, that's the hero's way, to do great deeds



And yet not boast of them, but to hide rather  
Behind a modest shame t'avoid applause :  
But when he thus disdains the offering  
Of grateful praise, tell me what offering then  
Will he not scorn? And, Knight ! were you not here  
A stranger and a captive, not thus boldly  
I'd put you to the question. Speak, command :  
How can I serve you ?

*Templar.* Serve me? In no wise.

*Nathan.* See ! I am rich.

*Templar.* But rich Jew never was  
With me the better Jew.

*Nathan.* Would you for that  
Decline what notwithstanding he possesses  
Of good, and take no help of his full hands ?

*Templar.* Nay, as for that, I'll speak no austere vows  
Even for my mantle's sake. When it shall be  
Not part, as now, but wholly rags threadbare,  
When seam nor stitches longer hold, I'll come  
And borrow of you something for a new one,  
Money or stuff.—Nay, eye me not so close,  
You're still secure, 'tis not yet so far gone.  
'Tis still in fair condition ; just one spot  
Here on the lappet's foul—where it was singed.  
And that it got when out of the fierce flame  
I bore your daughter.

*Nathan.* [*Who seizes the lappet and gazes at it.*] Now 'tis  
wonderful

That such a foul spot, such a touch of fire  
Should bear the man a better testimony  
Than his own mouth. Now would I kiss it straight,  
This rusty fleck ! Forgive me ; 'twas not wilful.

*Templar.* What ?

*Nathan.* 'Twas a tear fell on it.

*Templar.* That's no matter !  
Has had more drops than that.—(This Jew will soon,  
I fear, bewilder me).

*Nathan.* Were I too bold  
To beg such kindness, that you once would send  
Your mantle to my child ?

*Templar.* Why, for what purpose ?

*Nathan.* That she, too, press her lips upon this fleck.  
For she now wishes, though the hope is vain,

Herself to embrace your knees.

*Templar.*

But, Jew—

Your name is Nathan?—Truly, Nathan, you have spoken  
To me such words—so kind—so delicate

You have startled me . . . but certainly . . . I would . . .

*Nathan.* Pose and disguise you, as you will. Even here

I find you out. You were too good, too modest,  
To be more courteous. For—the girl, all feeling;

Her woman-ambassador, all zeal to serve;

The father far removed—your only care

Was all for her good name; you fled temptation,

Fled, that you might not conquer: now I thank you—

*Templar.* I see you know how Templar Knights should think.

*Nathan.* And only Templars? only they? and only

Because the Order's rule commands it so?

I know how good men think, and I know too

All lands bear good men.

*Templar.*

Yet, with difference?

*Nathan.* O true, difference in colour, dress and form.

*Templar.* But more or fewer in the different climes.

*Nathan.* I hold that this distinction is but small.

Everywhere great men need great spheres, and when

Too thick they're planted, they then break away

Their branches. But the medium men like us,

On the other hand, are everywhere in crowds.

Only, the one must not abase the other;

Only, the halt must tolerate the lame;

Only, the hillock must not vaunt itself,

Or think it the one summit in the world.

*Templar.* Most nobly said! But know you not the people

That first abased all others? Know you not

What nation first of all proclaimed itself

The Chosen Race? How, if I could not cease

This people, not indeed to hate—not hate—

But for their pride to dis-esteem? Their pride

Which they bequeathed to Muslim and to Christian,

That their God was the true God, and theirs only!

You start to hear a Christian and a Templar

Speak thus. But tell me when and where this madness,

This pious rage to have the better God,

And to impose this better God as best

On the whole world, more in its blackest form

Been shown than here and now? From whose dimmed eyes

The scales fall not? But yet be blind, who will!  
 Forget what I have said, and let me go.

[*Is going.*

*Nathan.* Ha! know you not with how far firmer grasp  
 I now would hold you. Come, we must, we must  
 Be friends. Despise my people if you will.  
 Nor I nor you have chosen our people. Are we  
 Our people? People? What means then the people?  
 Are Jew and Christian rather Jew and Christian  
 Than men? Ah, had I found in you one more  
 Whom it suffices to be called a Man!

*Templar.* And so, by God, Nathan, you have, you have  
 Your hand! am shamed to have mistaken you  
 Even for a moment.

*Nathan.* And I'm proud of it.  
 Only the common rarely is misjudged.

*Templar.* And what is rare one seldom can forget,  
 Yes, Nathan, yes; we must, we must be friends.

*Nathan.* Already are. My Recha will rejoice!  
 And what a happy future opens up  
 Before my vision! You must know her first.

*Templar.* My heart's on fire within.—Who rushes yonder  
 Forth of your threshold? Is it not your Daja?

*Nathan.* Yes surely, and in trouble.

*Templar.* Can it be  
 Mishap befallen our Recha?

## SCENE VI

*The former, and Daja in haste*

*Daja.* Nathan! Nathan!

*Nathan.* Well?

*Daja.* Forgive me, noble Knight, that I break in  
 Thus on your converse.

*Nathan.* Well, what is't?

*Templar.* What is't?

*Daja.* A message from the Sultan: he would speak  
 With you. My God! the Sultan!

*Nathan.* Me? the Sultan?

Curious perhaps to see what novelties  
 I have brought home. Say only there's but little  
 Or almost nought unpacked.

*Daja.* O Nathan, no;

He will see nothing, he will speak with you,—  
With you in person, now, with no delay.

*Nathan.* I come at once. Do you return to Recha.

*Daja.* Take it not ill of us, worshipful Knight,—  
God, we are troubled, guessing not what means  
The Sultan.

*Nathan.* That we'll learn. Go, only go !

## SCENE VII

### *Nathan and the Templar*

*Templar.* You do not know him yet ; I mean, in person ?

*Nathan.* The Sultan ? No, not yet, though I have never  
Avoided him, nor have I sought to meet him,  
So loud the general voice spoke in his praise,  
That I must rather wish to think it just,  
Than see. But now, even were it otherwise—  
He has, by sparing of your life . . .

*Templar.* Ah, true ;  
That certainly is truth ; the life I live  
It is his gift—

*Nathan.* And thereby gave he me  
A double, threefold life. This, I confess,  
Has altered all between us ; thrown a cord  
At once about me, binding me to him,  
And to his service. Scarce now can I wait  
To know what he commands me ; ready for all  
Am I ; and ready, too, to tell him what  
I do is for your sake.

*Templar.* Nor I myself  
Have yet had chance to thank him, and have crossed  
Ofttimes his path in vain : for that impress  
I made on him came like a lightning flash  
And vanished even as quickly ; who can tell  
Whether he has me still in memory ?  
And yet he must, once more at least, recall me  
To fix my fate. 'Tis not enough that I  
Still live at his command, and by his will :  
I must await the word, after what rule  
And what direction I must spend my days.

*Nathan.* Doubtless, and therefore I delay no longer.  
Perhaps a word will fall may give occasion



To speak of you. Permit me, pardon me—  
I hasten thither. When, when shall we see you  
Within my gates?

*Templar.* When may I?

*Nathan.* When you will.

*Templar.* To-day, then.

*Nathan.* And your name, if I may ask?

*Templar.* My name was, sometime, Curd von Stauffen—Curd!

*Nathan.* Von Stauffen? Stauffen? Stauffen?

*Templar.* You are startled?

Why start you?

*Nathan.* Stauffen? Branches of this house,  
I know, are many.

*Templar.* Here in this very soil  
Do several rest and rot of this same race.  
My uncle—nay, my father as I call him—  
Is one—Why turn on me a gaze so keen,  
So searching?

*Nathan.* Nothing! nothing! How can I  
Grow tired of seeing you? And for this cause  
I leave you.

*Templar.* Searcher's eyes not seldom find  
More than they seek for. Nathan, this gives me pause.  
Let our acquaintance build on gradual time,  
Not prying upon glances.

[*Goes off.*]

*Nathan.* What said he?

“Searchers find often more than they desire.”

As if he read my soul! 'Tis even so.

This might befall me also.—Not alone

Wolf's figure and Wolf's walk; but his voice, too;

The carriage of his head—Wolf to the life;

And how he bare his sword upon the arm

And stroked his eyebrows, as did Wolf, to hide

The ardour of his gaze, so full of fire.

How such sharp-printed pictures yet can sleep

At whiles within, till word or tone recalls them.

Von Stauffen! right, 'tis right; Filnek and Stauffen—

I'll search this soon to the depths, but first must I

To Saladin. But how? Is not that Daja

Lurking and listening? Come, my Daja, come.

## SCENE VIII

*Daja. Nathan*

*Nathan.* What now? Something, to-day, pricks both your hearts  
Quite other news to know than what the Sultan  
Will ask of me.

*Daja.* And do you blame her for it?  
You had begun to talk in friendlier mood  
That moment when the Sultan's message came  
And drove us from the window.

*Nathan.* Tell her now  
That any moment she may look for him;  
He promised this.

*Daja.* For sure? for sure?

*Nathan.* My Daja,  
I trust you and will trust. Be on your guard,  
Be dutiful, be true, leave no regrets  
For after conscience—See that you destroy not  
One point of all my plan. Only relate  
And question still with maiden modesty  
And due reserve . . .

*Daja.* That you at such an hour  
Could yet remember this! I go; and you  
Must also, for, behold! there comes in haste  
From Saladin a second messenger,  
Al-Hafi, your good Dervish.

## SCENE IX

*Nathan. Al-Hafi*

*Al-Hafi.* Ha, ha! the very man whom I was seeking.

*Nathan.* Is there such haste? What asks he at my hands?

*Al-Hafi.* Who?

*Nathan.* Saladin. Tell him I come! I come!

*Al-Hafi.* To whom? To Saladin?

*Nathan.* Has he not sent you?

*Al-Hafi.* Me? No; already has his message come?

*Nathan.* Yea, verily.

*Al-Hafi.* Then everything is right.

*Nathan.* What? What is right?

*Al-Hafi.* That no blame lights on me :  
God knows I'm not to blame. What have I not  
Said, whispered, lied of you to turn it off?

*Nathan.* To turn what off? What's this that you call right?

*Al-Hafi.* That you're his right-hand now, his Chancellor.

I pity you. Yet second thoughts forbid.  
For from this hour I go; go, you have heard  
Already whither, and you know the road.  
Upon the way can I do ought for you?

Am at your service. It must be only what  
One naked can drag with him. Speak : I go.

*Nathan.* Bethink you now, Al-Hafi, once bethink you ;

That I as yet know nothing of these things  
Whereof you're voluble. What means it all?

*Al-Hafi.* But you will bring the sack along with you.

*Nathan.* Sack?

*Al-Hafi.* Well, the gold you'll lend to Saladin.

*Nathan.* And is this all?

*Al-Hafi.* Perhaps I should look on

And watch him bleed you to the very toes?

And see the waste of his sweet charity

Draw from the once-full barns and draw again

Until the wretched aborigines,

Ev'n the poor mice, are starved? Perhaps you dream

That he who's thirsty for your gold will take

Your counsel also? Ha ! he follow counsel !

Since when has Saladin suffered advice?

Think rather, Nathan, what's just chanced to me.

*Nathan.* What, then?

*Al-Hafi.* I came on him as he played chess

With sister Sittah : she's a clever player ;

And the game Saladin imagined lost

Stood yet upon the board. I gave a glance

And saw the contest neither lost nor won.

*Nathan.* For you a find indeed ! You trembled then.

*Al-Hafi.* A move with king on pawn was all required

To give her check. If I could only show you !

*Nathan.* I well can trust you there.

*Al-Hafi.* For so the rook

Were freed, and she were done. This I would show him,

And call him. Think !

*Nathan.* He was not of your mind?

*Al-Hafi.* He would not listen, and contemptuously

He brushed the game down.

*Nathan.* Is it possible?

*Al-Hafi.* Saying, for once at least he'd take checkmate ;  
He wished it. Is that play?

*Nathan.* Hardly, in sooth :

'Tis playing with the play.

*Al-Hafi.* Like that, it's worth

A rotten filbert.

*Nathan.* Money here or there !

That is the least. But not to listen to you,  
Upon so weighty a point not once to listen,  
Not to admire your eagle vision ! That,  
That cries out, think you not, for its revenge?

*Al-Hafi.* You jest ! I told you this that you might know

The kind of brain he is ; brief, in one word,  
His whimsies weary me, and I have done.

Here am I running among filthy Moors

To ask the use of filthy purses. I,

Who never in my days begged for myself,

Am now for others borrowing. Borrowing's as bad

Almost as begging, and the lending so

At usury as bad almost as theft.

Amongst my people by the Ganges shore

I shall need neither, nor need I be

Of either, instrument. For by the Ganges,

The Ganges only you'll find men, but here

No man save you were worthy of the boon

To live by Ganges shore. Come you with me.

Leave Saladin the plunder, at his will.

He'll bring you step by step to beggary,

And all your baggage with you. For a guide

And warrantor I'll stand. I pray you, come.

*Nathan.* Methinks, indeed, 't might be our last resort.

Yet, Hafi, I must ponder it. Wait you . . .

*Al-Hafi.* Ponder it? Such things abide no pondering.

*Nathan.* Only till I return from Saladin ;

Till leave-takings . . .

*Al-Hafi.* To hesitate and ponder

But asks excuses not to dare. The man

Who cannot at a wink decide to live

His self-poised life, must live another's slave

For ever. As you will ! Farewell, as seems

You best. My way lies yonder : your way here.



*Nathan.* Hafi ! You'll settle first your treasurership ?

*Al-Hafi.* A jest. The total of my treasure-chest  
Is not worth reckoning. And for my account  
Yourself or Sittah shall be warranty—  
Farewell !

[*Exit.*

*Nathan.* Be warrant for him ! Yes, I know him  
Savage and kind and faithful ; the true beggar,  
When all is said, is the one genuine King !

ACT III—SCENE I

*In Nathan's house. Recha and Daja*

*Recha.* Daja, what were my father's words to-day ?

" I might expect him any moment now " ?

Surely that sounds as though he might at once  
Appear. Has not a world of moments gone ?

Ah, well, who thinks of moments that are fled ?

In each " next minute " I'm resolved to live ;

That one will surely come that brings him here.

*Daja.* O that accursed message of the Sultan !

But for it Nathan would have brought him straightway.

*Recha.* And when this longed-for moment has arrived,

With its fulfilment of my tenderest wish——

What then ? what then ?

*Daja.*

What then ? Why, then, I hope

The tenderest of *my* wishes too shall move

To its fulfilling.

*Recha.*

What can take its place

Then, in my heart, that will have quite unlearned

To throb without some one o'ermastering wish ?

If nothing—that were terror !

*Daja.*

My, my wish

Will enter then the place of that fulfilled ;

My wish to know you in safe hands, in Europe,

In hands all worthy to have *you* in keeping.

*Recha.* Strangely deceived ! For what makes this wish yours,

The same forbids it ever should be mine.

Your country is the magnet which attracts you,

And shall my own, my own not hold me back ?

Shall the image of your loved ones vividly

Rise on your inward vision, and prevail,

More than mine round me, seen and felt and known?

*Daja.* Struggle you will, but struggle as you will,  
The ways of Heaven are still the ways of Heaven.  
What if it were then he who rescued you,  
Through whom his God for Whom he fights should lead you  
Back to the soil whose daughter you were born?

*Recha.* *Daja*, you speak most strangely; your wild brain  
Does breed the queerest fancies. His? "His God"  
"For Whom he fights." Then whom does God belong to?  
What kind of God who to one man belongs,  
Who needs be fought for by His worshippers?—  
Nay; who shall tell for what soil we were born  
If just that spot where we were really born  
Not claims us? If my father heard you speak!  
What would he do to you, who image ever  
My happiness removed afar from him?  
What do to you, finding you wantonly  
Mixing the seed of reason, that in my soul  
He sowed so pure, with your land's weeds and flowers?  
*Daja*, dear *Daja*, no; he will not suffer  
Your motley growths to root upon my ground.  
And I must tell you I myself have felt  
How beautiful so'er these blossoms show,  
My ground enfeebled and consumed thereby;  
Feel in their soul-sweet fragrance heart and brain  
Made giddy and bewildered. Your own head  
Can bear it, being used. Nor do I blame  
Therefor your stronger nerves, that can support it:  
Only it suits me not; and even your angel  
Comes little short of quite befooling me.  
I am ashamed here in my father's house  
Of such a folly.

*Daja.* Folly! As if all reason  
Had its home here! Folly! Folly! Folly!  
O if I dared but speak!

*Recha.* And dare you not?  
When was I not all ear whene'er you pleased  
To tell me of the heroes of your faith?  
For their great deeds was I not ever ready  
With admiration; from their martyrdoms  
Have I withheld the tribute of my tears?  
Their faith, indeed, did ne'er appear to me  
What's most heroic in them. Yet more welcome

Ever to me the doctrine, that devotion  
And piety towards God cannot depend  
On our beliefs or fancies about God.  
Dear Daja, this my father often said :  
And you consented with him to its truth :  
Why undermine you what with him you builded ?  
Daja, this is no talk wherewith to prelude  
The meeting with our friend—For me perhaps  
'Tis fitting, for to me so much depends—But hark,  
A knocking at the gate ! What if 'twere he !

## SCENE II

*Recha. Daja and the Templar, to whom someone outside opens the door with the words :*

Enter, sir Knight !

*Recha. [Starts back, composes herself, and is about to fall at his feet.]*  
It is ! it is my rescuer !

*Templar. This to escape I made my coming tardy*  
And yet . . .

*Recha. Before this proud man's feet I kneel*  
Only to thank my God and not the man.  
The man refuses thanks, wishes for that  
As little as the water-pail that at the fire  
Did show itself so zealous, filled itself  
And poured itself, and filled, nor cared a whit ;  
So, even so, the man ; he, too, was thrown  
With like indifference upon the flame,  
And there, as chanced, I fell into his arm ;  
And then, by chance, remained, as might a spark  
Upon his mantle, lying on his arms ;  
Till something, what I know not, flung us both  
Out of the burning. What is here for thanks ?  
In Europe wine will urge to other deeds  
Braver than these. The Templars, too, must ever  
Stand ready for the like, they must, we know,  
Just like to hounds a little better trained,  
Snatch men both from the water and the fire—

*Templar. [Who has looked on surprised and disturbed.] O Daja,*  
Daja ! if at troubled moments  
My fretted spirit dealt with you unkindly,  
Why every folly that escaped my lips

Brought you to her? That was too sharp revenge.  
Ah, Daja! from this hour in happier light  
Set me before her.

*Daja.* But, sir Knight, I think  
These little thorns you threw against her heart  
Did you small damage there.

*Recha.* What? you had trouble?  
And were more avaricious of your cares  
Than of your life?

*Templar.* My sweet and gracious child!—  
But all my soul's divided between eye  
And ear! Sure this was not the maid; no, no,  
This was not she I drew from out the fire  
For who that knew her had not dared the same?  
Who would have waited for me?—True—disguised—the  
terror

*[Pause, in which, gazing at her, he seems to lose himself.]*

*Recha.* You are not changed—I find you still the same  
*[Pause; until she continues in order to interrupt his astonished gaze.]*

Now tell us, Knight, where you have been so long?  
Might I not almost ask—where you are now?

*Templar.* I am,—where mayhap I've no right to be.

*Recha.* Where you have been, perhaps where you've no right?  
That is not well.

*Templar.* On—on—what is the mountain?  
On Sinai.

*Recha.* Ah, upon Sinai? Beautiful!  
Now can I learn at last from trusty lips  
Whether 'tis true . . .

*Templar.* What? whether it is true  
That still the self-same spot is to be seen  
Where Moses stood with God, when . . .

*Recha.* No, not that  
Where'er he stood, 'twas before God; whereof  
All that I need I know; but whether true  
That this same height is far less hard to climb  
Than to descend? For, with all hills I've scaled,  
As yet, 'twas ever just the opposite.  
How, Knight, why turn away? Would you not see me?

*Templar.* I turn from seeing you to hear you better.

*Recha.* More that I may not mark you when you laugh  
At my simplicity, and how you smile,  
When I no weightier questions ask of you



About this holiest of all holy hills.

Is it not so?

*Templar.* Then I must look again  
Into your eyes. What? do you shut them fast?  
Now stifle you your laughter? What need I  
To read in looks, in questionable looks,  
What ears can tell me plainly—audibly  
You speak—But silent now? Ah, Recha! Recha!  
Sure he spoke truly “Know her only first!”

*Recha.* Who has—by whom—that told you?

*Templar.* “Only know  
Her first”; it was your father’s word to me,  
Spoken of you.

*Daja.* And not I, too, by chance?  
And not I, too?

*Templar.* But he, where is he, then?  
Where is your father, then? Is he perhaps  
Still with the Sultan?

*Recha.* Doubtless.

*Templar.* Still, still there?  
O me forgetful! No, it cannot be  
That he’s there still. Down by the cloister wall  
He would await my coming; so ’twas fixed,  
So settled when we parted. Pardon me,  
I hasten to bring him . . .

*Daja.* That is my affair;  
Rather, remain. I bring him instantly.

*Templar.* Not so, not so. He looks to meet me there,  
Not you. Besides he might—no man can tell—  
So easily with Saladin have fallen  
On disaccord—you do not know the Sultan—  
Sure he’s in danger if I go not.

*Recha.* How?

*Templar.* Danger, danger, for me, for you, for him,  
If in all speed I go not.

### SCENE III

#### *Recha and Daja*

*Recha.* What means it, Daja?  
All in a moment! Why? What’s come to him?  
What drives him?

*Daja.* Patience, let him be. I think  
'Tis no bad sign, perhaps.

*Recha.* But sign of what?

*Daja.* Something takes place within him. Something boils  
Which yet must not boil over. Leave him only.  
'Tis your turn now.

*Recha.* My turn; *Daja*? You grow,  
Like him, past comprehending.

*Daja.* Soon you can  
Requite him the disquiet he has caused you.  
Be only not too hard, or too revengeful.

*Recha.* Of what you speak, perhaps yourself may know.

*Daja.* Are you already quite at rest again?

*Recha.* That am I; yes, that am I . . .

*Daja.* Or at least  
Confess your unrest gives more joy than pain,  
And that you thank his unrest for the rest  
That you enjoy.

*Recha.* Then all unconsciously !  
For what at most I might confess to you,  
Were this that it surprises even myself  
How such a calm within so suddenly  
Can follow in the wake of such a tempest.  
This nearer sight of him, his talk, his tone  
Have—have . . .

*Daja.* Left you quite satiate?

*Recha.* No, not quite :  
Nay, that I will not say; nay, far from that.

*Daja.* Only the first fierce hunger stilled.

*Recha.* Well, yes.  
If so you'll have it.

*Daja.* I? O, not at all.

*Recha.* To me he must be dear and ever dearer  
As the days pass, even if my pulse change not  
When I but hear his name; no more my heart  
Beat faster, stronger when I think on him—  
What am I babbling? Come, dear *Daja*, come  
Just once more to the window that looks out  
Upon the palms.

*Daja.* Ah ! the fierce hunger, then,  
Is not quite stilled.

*Recha.* At least I'll see the palms  
Yet once again, not only him amongst them.

*Daja.* This chill begins, I doubt, another fever—  
*Recha.* What chill? I feel no chill. And verily  
See not less gladly what I see in calm.

## SCENE IV

*An audience chamber in Saladin's palace. Saladin and Sittah*

*Saladin.* [*In entering, speaks towards door.*]

Soon as the Jew arrives, let him come here.

He does not seem to hasten over-much.

*Sittah.* Perhaps not found at once, or gone abroad.

*Saladin.* O sister! sister!

*Sittah.* Saladin, you act

As if a battle were in prospect.

*Saladin.* Yes;

And that with weapons I have never practised.

I have to pose and keep a careful guard;

To lay traps, too, to stand upon smooth ice.

When could I so? When studied I such tricks?

Must do them now. Ay me, for what? for what?

To fish for money! Money! to extort by dread

The money of a Jew. To such mean arts

Am I at last reduced, to gain myself

The meanest of mean things.

*Sittah.* The meanest thing,

Too much despised, will take revenge, brother.

*Saladin.* Alas! 'Tis true! And if this Jew of ours

Be wholly that good man, so wise, humane,

The dervish painted once?

*Sittah.* If such he be,

Why, then we need no snares. The snare awaits

Only the fearful, cautious, greedy Jew—

The good and wise is ours without a snare.

A pleasure you've before you, even to hear

How such a man will speak, with what bold strength

Either he'll snap the cord, or it may be

With what shy prudence he'll slip past the net:

This joy's before you.

*Saladin.* True, and I await it

As a new pleasure—

*Sittah.* Why, then nothing further

Can disconcert you. See, 'tis merely one

Out of the multitude ; merely a Jew  
Like other Jews : would not you be ashamed  
To seem to him what he thinks all men are ?  
And thinks the better, the humaner, man  
The more a fool.

*Saladin.* I must do wickedly,  
You mean, so that the wicked may not think  
Wickedly of me ?

*Sittah.* True, if wickedness  
Be treating things according to their kind.

*Saladin.* Ah ! let a woman frame what scheme she will,  
Trust her to fit it with a fair disguise.  
If I but touch a ware so delicate,  
It breaks in my coarse hand. For things like that  
Whoso invented them must carry through,  
With artful sleight and cunning craftiness.  
Be it as 'twill ! I dance as best I can—  
And think I'd rather do it ill than well.

*Sittah.* Trust not yourself too little. You will win  
If you resolve it. Ever men like you  
Would fain convince us 'tis the sword alone,  
Only the sword that gained them victory—  
The lion who went hunting with the fox,  
Of his companion doubtless was ashamed,  
Not of his cunning . . .

*Saladin.* O, women are so happy  
When they seduce men to their level. Go !  
Go, Sittah ! I have learned my lesson quite.

*Sittah.* What, must I go ?

*Saladin.* Surely you would not stay ?

*Sittah.* If not stay with you—in the presence here—  
Then in the ante-chamber . . .

*Saladin.* There to hearken ?

No, sister, no ; if I may once insist.  
Away ! the curtain rustles, he is here ;  
I'll see to it you have not long to wait.

[*While she leaves by one door, Nathan enters by the other ; and  
Saladin sits down.*]



## SCENE V

*Saladin and Nathan*

*Saladin.* Come nearer, Jew ! Approach ! Come closer yet—  
And fear not.

*Nathan.* Fear be to your enemies.

*Saladin.* You are called Nathan ?

*Nathan.* Yes.

*Saladin.* Nathan the Wise ?

*Nathan.* No.

*Saladin.* By yourself, O no, but by the people.

*Nathan.* May be ; the people !

*Saladin.* Yet you think not, surely,  
I hold in scorn the judgment of the people ?  
Long have I wished that I might know the man  
Whom they call wise.

*Nathan.* Ev'n if in mockery  
They named him ? Ev'n if to the people " wise "  
Should mean no more than prudent ? prudent but he  
Who reckons cleverly his own advantage—

*Saladin.* His true advantage, mean you, his true good ?

*Nathan.* Then verily were the man of selfish mind  
Most prudent. Then indeed were wise and prudent  
But one.

*Saladin.* You seek to prove, what you would contradict.  
Men's true advantages the people know not.  
You know them, or at least have sought to know ;  
Have weighed them, pondered them ; and this itself  
Already makes the wise man.

*Nathan.* Which no man  
But thinks he is.

*Saladin.* Enough of modesty,  
Too much of that, when one expects dry reason,  
Can make one sick. [Sings up.

Let's come to business.

But—but—uprightly, Jew ! In honesty !

*Nathan.* I will so serve you, Sultan, to be deemed  
Worthy your constant custom.

*Saladin.* Serve me, how ?

*Nathan.* The best of all I have, be at your service  
And at the lowest price.

*Saladin.* Of what speak you ?

Not, surely, of your wares? Chaffer and higgles  
My sister may. (That's for the listener !)  
I have no use for merchants and their goods.

*Nathan.* Then without doubt you will desire to know  
Whatever on my way I chanced across  
Or marked of your foes' arms—if openly—

*Saladin.* Even of that I nothing ask of you.  
Of that I know already all I need ;  
In short—

*Nathan.* Command me, Sultan.

*Saladin.* I desire  
Instruction of you in another field,  
Quite other ; and to use your wisdom there.  
Since you are wise, tell me as to a friend,  
What faith, what law, have satisfied you best.

*Nathan.* Sultan, I am a Jew—

*Saladin.* A Muslim I.  
The Christian stands between us. Of these three  
Religions only one can be the true one.  
A man like you will not consent to stay  
Where'er the accident of birth has cast him ;  
Or if he stays, 'twill be of 's own election  
As insight, reason, choice of best things, prompt him.  
Come, then, impart to me your insight : let me hear  
The moving reasons : since for this high quest  
Time was not granted me. Tell me the choice,  
Tell me the grounds—of course, in confidence—  
Which fixed the choice, that I may make it mine.  
How now ! You start, you weigh me with your eye.  
It well may be that of all Sultans yet  
I am the first inspired by such a whim,  
Which yet methinks is no unworthy one  
Even for a Sultan. Not so? Then speak out !  
Speak out. Or would you have a minute's space  
To ponder it? Good ; I will give it you—  
(Has she been listening? I will catch her out :  
And hear how I have managed.) Ponder now ;  
Ponder it swiftly. Presently I'm here.

*[Goes into the ante-chamber, to which Sittah had betaken herself.]*

## SCENE VI

*Nathan, alone*

*Nathan.* Hm ! Hm ! Marvellous ! What's to happen now ?  
What does the Sultan want ? I came prepared  
For money, and he asks for truth—for truth !  
And wants it paid in ready cash, as though  
The truth were coinage. Yea, even as if  
It were old coinage that was told by weight.  
That might pass, truly ! But such new-coined pieces  
That owe the die their value, must be counted.  
As money into sack, does one sweep truth  
Into one's head ? Who, then, is here the Jew,  
I or the Sultan ? Might he not, perhaps,  
Ask for the truth in truth ? 'Twere a mean thing  
Even the suspicion that he used truth  
As a mere trap to catch me. That were mean ?  
Too mean ? What is too mean for great men's use ?  
True, true. See how he drives the door and storms  
The house ! Surely one knocks and listens first  
When one comes as a friend. So, warily  
I'll walk ! But how, but what ? Wholly to be  
The common Jew, that will not serve me here,  
Still less not to be Jew at all. For if  
Not Jew, he well might ask me, Then why not  
A Mussulman ? That's it ! And that can save me !  
Not children only, we can feed men too  
With fables. Ah ! he comes. Well, let him come !

## SCENE VII

*Saladin and Nathan*

*Saladin.* (The field is clear now.) Not too soon, I hope,  
Do I return to you ? You are at end  
With your deliberation. Come, then, speak !  
Not a soul hears us.

*Nathan.* All the world may listen  
And welcome.

*Saladin.* Confident, so confident  
Is Nathan of his cause ? Ha ! such I name  
A wise man ! Who dissembles never truth

But stakes all for it—body, life, and soul.

*Nathan.* Yes, truly, when 'tis needful and availeth.

*Saladin.* Henceforward I can hope with right to wear  
A title of mine, reformer of the world  
And of the law.

*Nathan.* In sooth, a lovely title !  
Yet, Sultan, ere I trust me to your hands,  
Perhaps you will permit me to relate  
An ancient tale ?

*Saladin.* Why not ? I was from childhood  
Lover of tales, well told.

*Nathan.* Ah ! ah ! *Well told.*  
That's more than I can claim.

*Saladin.* Come, why again  
So proudly modest ? Come, the tale ! the tale !

*Nathan.* There lived a man in a far Eastern clime  
In hoar antiquity, who from the hand  
Of his most dear beloved received a ring  
Of priceless estimate. An opal 'twas  
Which spilt a hundred lovely radiances  
And had a magic power, that whoso wore it,  
Trusting therein, found grace with God and man.  
What wonder therefore that this man o' the East  
Let it not from his finger, and took pains  
To keep it to his household for all time.  
Thus he bequeathed the jewel to the son  
Of all his sons he loved best, and provided  
That he in turn bequeath it to the son  
Who was to him the dearest ; evermore  
The best-beloved, without respect of birth,  
By right o' the ring alone should be the head,  
The house's prince. You understand me, Sultan.

*Saladin.* I understand : continue !

*Nathan.* Well, this ring,  
From son to son descending, came at last  
Unto a father of three sons, who all  
To him, all three, were dutiful alike,  
And whom, all three, in natural consequence,  
He loved alike. Only from time to time  
Now this ; now that one ; now the third, as each  
Might be alone with him, the other twain  
Not sharing his o'erflowing heart, appeared  
Worthiest the ring ; and then, piously weak,



He promised it to each. And so things went  
Long as they could. But dying hour drawn near  
Brought the good father to perplexity.

It pained him, the two sons, trusting his word,  
Should thus be wounded. What was he to do?

Quickly he sends for an artificer,

To make him on the model of his ring

Two others, bidding spare nor cost nor pains

To make them in all points identical;

And this the artist did. When they are brought

Even the father scarcely can distinguish

His pattern-ring. So, full of joy, he calls

His sons, and each one to him separately;

And gives to each son separately his blessing,

Gives each his ring; and dies. Still hear you, Sultan?

*Saladin.* [*Who has turned away perplexed.*] I hear, I hear—Only  
bring you the tale

To speedy end. Is 't done?

*Nathan.* The tale is finished.

For what still follows, any man may guess.

Scarce was the father dead, but each one comes

And shows his ring, and each one claims to be

True prince o' the house. Vainly they search, strive, argue,

The true ring was not proved or provable—

[*After a pause, during which he waits the Sultan's reply.*

Almost as hard to prove as to us now

What the true creed is.

*Saladin.* How? is this to be

The answer to my question?

*Nathan.* Nay, it merely

Makes my excuse that I don't trust myself

Exactly to distinguish twixt the rings

The Sire with express purpose had bade make

So that no probing might distinguish them—

*Saladin.* The rings! You play with me! It was my thought

That the religions I have named to you

Were plainly, easily distinguishable,

Down even to clothing, down to meat and drink!

*Nathan.* Only not so in questions of foundation—

For base not all their creeds on history,

Written or handed down? And history

Must be received in faith implicitly.

Is't not so? Then on whom rest we this faith

Implicit, doubting not? Surely on our own?  
Them from whose blood we spring? Surely on them  
Who from our childhood gave us proofs of love?  
Who never have deceived us, saving when  
'Twere happier, safer so to be deceived?  
How, then, shall I my fathers less believe  
Than you your own? or in the other case,  
Can I demand that you should give the lie  
To your forefathers, that mine be not gainsaid?  
And, yet again, the same holds of the Christians.  
Is't not so?

*Saladin.* (By high God! The man is right;  
I must be dumb.)

*Nathan.* Then let us come again  
Back to our rings. As we have said—the sons  
Appealed to law; and swore before the Judge  
Out of the father's hand, immediately,  
To have received the ring—and this was true—  
After for long he had the promise sure  
One day to enjoy the privilege of the ring—  
And this no less was true. Each cried the father  
Could not be false towards him, and ere he might  
Let such suspicion stain him, must believe,  
Glad as he were to think the best of them,  
His brothers played him false, and he should soon  
Expose the traitors, justify himself.

*Saladin.* And now, the Judge? I'm waiting, fain to hear  
What you will make him say. What was his verdict?

*Nathan.* Thus spake the Judge: Bring me the father here  
To witness; I will hear him; and if not  
Leave then my judgment seat. Think you this chair  
Is set for reading of riddles? Do you wait,  
Expecting the true ring to open mouth?  
Yet halt! I hear, the genuine ring possesses  
The magic power to bring its wearer love  
And grace with God and man. That must decide;  
For never can the false rings have this virtue.  
Well, then; say whom do two of you love best?  
Come, speak! What! silent? Is the rings' effect  
But backward and not outward? Is it so  
That each one loves himself most? Then I judge  
All three of you are traitors and betrayed!

Your rings all three are false. The genuine ring  
Perchance the father lost, and to replace it  
And hide the loss, had three rings made for one.

*Saladin.* O, splendid ! splendid !

*Nathan.* So, went on the Judge,

You may not seek my counsel, but my verdict ;  
But go ! My counsel is, you take the thing  
Exactly as it lies. If each of you  
Received his ring from his good father's hand,  
Then each of you believe his ring the true one—  
'Tis possible the father would not suffer  
Longer the one ring tyrannise in 's house,  
Certain, he loved all three, and equal loved,  
And would not injure two to favour one.  
Well, then, let each one strive most zealously  
To show a love untainted by self-care,  
Each with his might vie with the rest to bring  
Into the day the virtue of the jewel  
His finger wears, and help this virtue forth  
By gentleness, by spirit tractable,  
By kind deeds and true piety towards God ;  
And when in days to come the magic powers  
Of these fair rings among your children's children  
Brighten the world, I call you once again,  
After a thousand thousand years are lapsed,  
Before this seat of judgment. On that day  
A wiser man shall sit on it and speak.  
Depart ! So spake the modest Judge.

*Saladin.* God ! God !

*Nathan.* Saladin, if you feel yourself to be  
This wiser promised man . . .

*Saladin.* [*Who rushes towards him, seizes his hand, which to the  
end he does not release.*] I, dust ? I, nothing ?  
O God !

*Nathan.* What would you, Saladin ?

*Saladin.* My good Nathan !

The thousand thousand years of the great Judge  
Are not yet up. Not mine His judgment throne.  
Go ! but abide my friend.

*Nathan.* Had Saladin

Further no word for me ?

*Saladin.* Not anything.

*Nathan.* Nothing?

*Saladin.* No, not a jot—Why ask you this?

*Nathan.* I should have begged an opportunity  
To proffer a petition.

*Saladin.* Need you then  
An opportunity? My friend, speak on!

*Nathan.* I come from a wide round, whereon my task  
Was gathering in of debts. Almost I have  
Too much of ready coin. The time begins  
To assume the look of storm. I hardly know  
Where safely to bestow it, and have thought,  
Seeing how much this coming war will ask,  
That you, perchance, might use a portion.

*Saladin.* [*Looking him in the eyes steadily.*] Nathan!  
I will not ask whether before this hour  
Al-Hafi has been with you, nor enquire  
Whether a suspicion prompts you to this offer  
Of your freewill . . .

*Nathan.* What mean you, a suspicion?

*Saladin.* Yes, I deserve it. Pardon. For what helps it?  
I must confess, I had it in my mind—

*Nathan.* Not surely to request the same of me?

*Saladin.* Yea, verily.

*Nathan.* Thus both of us were helped!

But that I cannot send you all my means  
The Templar gives occasion: sure you know him.  
A heavy obligation must I meet  
To him before all else.

*Saladin.* A Templar, what?  
Surely you will not aid with your good gold  
My worst of enemies?

*Nathan.* I speak of one,  
One only, him whose life you spared.

*Saladin.* Ah what  
You mind me of—Most strange! I had forgot  
The stripling. Know you him? Where is he lodged?

*Nathan.* Where lodged? Why, know you not how much of  
blessing

Fell to my lot, even through your grace done to him?  
'Twas he, at risk of his new-gifted life,  
That saved my daughter from the flaming walls.

*Saladin.* He? did he that? Truly, he looked like that—  
This surely had my brother likewise done,



Whom he so much resembles. Is he still  
In the Holy City? Bring him here to me.  
I've told so many things to my dear sister  
Of this her brother, whom she never knew,  
That I must needs show her his counterfeit!  
Go, fetch him! See, of one good action, tho'  
It was of simple passion born, so many  
Other good deeds flow forth! Go fetch him hither.

*Nathan.* [*Letting go of Saladin's hand.*] Straightway! And of  
the rest, the other matter,  
Does it, too, stand? [*Exit.*

*Saladin.* Ah, had my sister stayed  
To hearken! Quick, to her! to her! For how  
Can all be told that now I have to tell?

[*Exit from the other side.*

### SCENE VIII

*Under the Palms, in neighbourhood of the cloister, where the  
Templar waits for Nathan.*

*Templar.* [*Walks up and down, struggling with himself, till he  
breaks out.*] Here halts the victim, weary and foredone—  
'Tis well! I would not know or see more clear  
What in me passes, and would not foresee  
What yet will pass. Enough! I've fled in vain,  
In vain! And yet I could nought else but fly.  
Well, come what will; the stroke fell far too swiftly  
To be escaped; though hard and long I struggled  
To come from under. To see her, whom yet  
To see I had but small desire, to see her  
And the resolve never to lose her from  
Mine eyes, and yet what speak I of resolve?  
Resolve is plan, is act, while I but suffer,  
Suffer, not act—to see her and to feel  
Bound to her by strong cords, bound up with her,  
Was one; is one: from her to live apart  
Is thought unthinkable and were my death,  
And wheresoever after death we are,  
'Twould be even there my death—Is this, then, love?  
So the Knight Templar loves assuredly,  
The Christian loves the Jewish maid, in truth:

Hm ! what of that ? In this the Holy Land,  
 And hereby holy to me evermore,  
 I have sloughed off a world of prejudices,—  
 What will my Order say ? As Templar Knight  
 I'm dead, was dead to them from that self hour  
 Which made me prisoner to Saladin,—  
 The head which Saladin restored to me,  
 Was it my old ?—'tis new ! and clear of all  
 The lies and stuff they babbled to it once,  
 Wherewith 'twas slaved ; and 'tis a better one,  
 Agreeing more with my paternal clime,  
 I feel it so in truth. For it begins  
 To think even as my father must have thought  
 Under those skies, unless those tales be false  
 They tell of him—Tales ? tales, yet credible  
 Which never seemed to me more credible  
 Than here they seem where I but run the risk  
 Of stumbling, where he fell. Ah, where he fell ?  
 I'll rather fall with men, than stand with children.  
 Sure, his example makes me confident  
 Of his approval. Whose approval else crave I ?  
 For Nathan's ? Furtherance more than approval  
 Will not be wanting there. The noble Jew !  
 Who yet desires not to seem more than Jew !  
 Here comes he hastening, gladness in his eyes.  
 Whoe'er came otherwise from Saladin ?  
 Ho ! Nathan !

## SCENE IX

*Nathan and the Templar*

*Nathan.* How ? Is 't you ?

*Templar.* It has been long,  
 Your converse with the Sultan.

*Nathan.* Not so long ;  
 For on my way to him I was much hindered.  
 Ah, truly, Curd, the man matches his fame.  
 His fame is his mere shadow. But now first  
 I have a thing to say that will not wait.

*Templar.* What ?

*Nathan.* He would speak with you and bids you come  
 Without delay. Give me your company  
 Now to my house, where first I must procure

A something for his hand, and then we go.

*Templar.* Over your threshold, Nathan, willingly  
I pass no more.

*Nathan.* Meanwhile you have been there  
Already and spoken with her. Come then, tell me  
How Recha pleases you?

*Templar.* Beyond all speech !  
Only—to see her more—never will I !  
Never, except I have your promise here  
That I may see her ever.

*Nathan.* How will you  
I should interpret that?

*Templar.* [*After a short pause falling on his neck.*] My father !  
father !

*Nathan.* Young man !

*Templar.* Not son? I pray you, Nathan !

*Nathan.* Beloved youth !

*Templar.* Not son? I pray you, Nathan !  
Beseech you by the tenderest ties of nature !  
O let not later bonds come in between !  
Let it suffice to be a man ! nor drive  
Me from you !

*Nathan.* Dear, dear friend ! . . .

*Templar.* And son?

Not son? Even not then, if gratitude  
Has paved love's way to your loved daughter's heart?  
Not even then, if both hearts only waited  
A father's gracious sign to melt in one?—  
You're silent.

*Nathan.* You surprise, you startle me,  
Young knight.

*Templar.* Surprise you, Nathan, startle you  
With your own inmost thoughts? You'll not disown them  
Because my lips have spoke them? I surprise you?

*Nathan.* There's something I must know—who was this Stauffen  
You claim as sire?

*Templar.* What say you, Nathan? what?  
Is curiosity, then, all you feel  
At such a moment?

*Nathan.* Nay, not so, for, look you,  
I myself knew, knew well in earlier years  
A Stauffen, his name Conrad.

*Templar.* Well, what think you?

That same name bore my father.

*Nathan.* Verily?

*Templar.* Myself am so called after him; for Curd  
Is Conrad.

*Nathan.* Even so, my Conrad could not be  
Your father. For my Conrad was like you,  
A Templar, and unwedded.

*Templar.* O, for that !

*Nathan.* How?

*Templar.* O, for that he still might be my father.

*Nathan.* Now you jest.

*Templar.* And you, you take it  
Quite too precisely. Say, what were it then?  
Something of bastard or side-blow perhaps !  
Granted, the wound is not to be despised—  
Absolve me of my proof of ancestry,  
And in my turn I will absolve you yours.  
Not truly that I touch with taint of doubt  
Your family tree. That, God forbid ! you could  
Uprear it leaf by leaf to Abraham.  
And beyond that I'll build it up myself,  
Attesting it by oath.

*Nathan.* Now you grow bitter.  
Have I deserved it? Think you I detracted  
Aught from your worth?—But yet, I will not take  
For a word dropped, offence. No more's to speak.

*Templar.* Really? No more to speak. O, then, forgive me !

*Nathan.* Come with me only, come !

*Templar.* But tell me whither?  
Not to your house? That never; that I cannot !—  
There's fire there. I will await you here. Go you !  
If I see her again; then many times  
I still shall see her. But if not, why then  
I've seen her far too often . . .

*Nathan.* I shall hasten.

## SCENE X

### *The Templar, and soon after Daja*

*Templar.* Enough and more. The brain of human-kind  
In grasp is almost limitless, yet often  
Suddenly fills to bursting with a trifle !



It matters nothing, nothing ; let it be  
Even full of what it will—Let patience work ;  
The spirit soon compounds the turgid stuff,  
Makes itself room ; order and light return.

Do I then love for the first time ? Or what  
I once called love, was it not love at all ?

Or is love only what I suffer now ?

*Daja.* [*Who has slipped in from the side.*] Sir Knight ! sir  
Knight !

*Templar.* Who calls ? Ha, Daja, you ?

*Daja.* I have slipped past him : but where you now stand,  
He still might see us. Come, behind this tree.

*Templar.* What is it ? Why so secret ? Tell me why.

*Daja.* What brings me to you, does concern a secret,  
A secret truly ; more, a double one—  
The one only know I, the other you  
Alone can know. How if we made exchange ?  
Trust me with yours, then I'll trust you with mine.

*Templar.* With pleasure, readily ; if I may know  
First what you think is mine. But out of yours  
That surely will appear. Only begin.

*Daja.* O, that would never do ; no, no, sir Knight ;  
You first ; I'll follow ; be assured that mine,  
My secret cannot help you by a jot,  
Have I not yours before it. Only quick !  
If I but win it by my questioning,  
Then you've confided nothing. Then my secret  
Remains my secret, and your own escapes.  
Still, you poor soldier ! That you men should think,  
O credulous men ! that you can keep such secrets  
From us poor women.

*Templar.* Secrets we ourselves  
Often don't know we have.

*Daja.* That well may be  
Then, to be sure, I'll so far act the friend  
To acquaint you with yourself. Say, what then made you  
So all at once vanish in cloud, and leave  
Your friends deserted ? that you do not now  
Return with Nathan ? Recha, has she so little  
Worked on you ? How ? or, should I ask, so much ?  
So much ! so much ! Instruct me how to know  
The fluttering of the poor ensnared bird  
Limed to the tree ! In brief, confess me here

That you do love her, love her even to madness,  
And I will tell——

*Templar.* To madness? Verily;  
Your insight is astounding.

*Daja.* Grant me then  
Only the love; I'll let you off the madness.

*Templar.* Since, I suppose, that may be taken for granted?  
A Templar-Knight to love a Jewish girl! . . .

*Daja.* Truly there seems but little sense in that—  
And yet at whiles there's more of sense in things  
Than we surmise; nor were 't incredible  
The Christ should lead us to Himself by ways  
The wise man of himself might never find.

*Templar.* Your words are solemn. (Well, if Providence  
Were put in place of Christ, were she not right?)  
You breed in me a curiosity  
I never knew before.

*Daja.* O, 'tis the land  
Of miracles!

*Templar.* (Well,—the miraculous.  
How can it otherwise? Seeing all the nations  
Crowd themselves here together.) My dear Daja,  
Consider it confessed—what you desire:  
That I do love her, hardly understand  
How I shall live without her; that . . .

*Daja.* Truly, sir Knight? Here pledge your oath to me  
To take her for your own, to save my Recha,  
Here, while life lasts; yonder, eternally.

*Templar.* And how? How can I? Can I swear to do  
What stands not in my power?

*Daja.* But in your power  
It stands. For by a single word I bring it  
Within your power.

*Templar.* So that not even her father  
Could hinder or obstruct?

*Daja.* Eh, Father—what Father!  
Her father *must* agree.

*Templar.* Must, Daja? Must?  
Sure, he's not fallen amongst robbers yet!  
There is no *must* for him.

*Daja.* I tell you truth;  
He must in the end consent, and gladly too.

*Templar.* Must, must, and gladly. Daja, how if I say

That I myself already tried to touch  
This chord within him?

*Daja.* And he would not accord?

*Templar.* No! No; with such a discord he joined in  
As sharply wounded me.

*Daja.* What say you? What!  
That you had shown him, even in shadow merely,  
Your love for her, and he did not leap up  
For joy? but frostily withdrew, and muttered  
Of difficulties?

*Templar.* So it was.

*Daja.* Then I

Will not reflect a single moment more—

[*Pause.*

*Templar.* And yet—you *are* reflecting?

*Daja.* All things else  
Prove Nathan kind—myself, how much I owe him!  
And now he will not listen! O, God knows  
My very heart bleeds in me, so to force him.

*Templar.* I pray you, *Daja*, free me once for all  
From these uncertainties. But if you are  
Yourself unsure, whether what you intend  
Should good or bad, shameful or worthy praise,  
Be called—then, silence! I'll forget  
That you have ought to keep unspoken.

*Daja.* Rather  
That stings me not to speak. Then know—our *Recha*  
Is not a Jewess; is,—she is a Christian.

*Templar.* So? Wish you joy! Was the delivery hard?  
Shrink you not from the travail! O go on,  
Go on with zeal to populate the skies,  
If you can't earth!

*Daja.* How, Knight? Deserves my news this mockery?  
That *Recha* is a Christian gives no joy  
To you, a Christian and a Templar Knight  
Who loves her?

*Templar.* Most especially, as she's  
A Christian of your making.

*Daja.* So you think?  
Well, let it be! But no, for I would see  
Him who will make her convert! 'Tis her fortune  
To have been long, what now she can't become.

*Templar.* Explain, or—go!

*Daja.* She is a Christian child,

And born of Christian parents ; is baptized . . .

*Templar.* [*Abruptly.*] And Nathan ?

*Daja.* Not her father !

*Templar.* Nathan not

Her father ? Know you what you speak ?

*Daja.* The truth,

Which many a time has cost me tears of blood.

No, he is not her father . . .

*Templar.* And had her  
Only brought up as a daughter ? had the child,  
The Christian child, brought up as Jewish maid ?

*Daja.* 'Tis certain.

*Templar.* And she knew not of her birth ?

Had never learnt of him that she a Christian

Was born and not a Jewess ?

*Daja.* Never, never !

*Templar.* And he not merely had brought up the child  
In this delusion, but has left the maiden  
In this deception still ?

*Daja.* Alas !

*Templar.* But—Nathan,  
The wise, good Nathan has allowed himself  
To falsify the voice of nature thus,  
Thus misdirect the outpouring of a heart  
Which, left to itself, would take quite other ways ?  
*Daja,* you have indeed confided here  
A weighty matter—which involves great issues—  
Which quite confounds me—which puts me in doubt  
What I must do. So give me time. Then, go !  
He passes here anon. He might surprise us.  
Therefore, go, *Daja* !

*Daja.* It would be my death !

*Templar.* Speak with him now I cannot. If you meet him,  
Say only that we two shall presently  
Meet in the Sultan's chamber.

*Daja.* But betray not  
To him what you have heard.—This does but give  
The last seal to the matter, takes away  
All scruples from you when you think of Recha—  
And if thereon you carry her to Europe,  
Let me not stay behind. I conjure you—

*Templar.* I lay that on my heart ; but, leave me now.



## ACT IV—SCENE I

SCENE : *In the cloisters of the convent**The Friar and soon thereafter the Templar**Friar.* Well, well ; of course the Patriarch is right !

Although as yet no single enterprise  
He laid upon my shoulders has success.  
Why does he choose only such jobs for me ?  
I have no craving for these artful games,  
I am not made for the persuader's part,  
Nor wish to stick my nose in everything  
Or play the meddling. Am I, then, for this,  
Desiring to be separate, for myself  
Alone, only the more by others' will  
To be the more entangled ?

*Templar.* [*Entering hastily.*] My good friar !

We meet again. A long time I have sought you.

*Friar.* Sought me, my lord ?*Templar.* Have you forgotten me ?

*Friar.* No, no ! I only thought that never in my life  
Should I so come to meet my lord again :  
Prayed the good God I might not. For God knows  
How loathsome was the errand laid on me,  
He knows whether I wished an open ear  
To find for it ; and knows how I rejoiced  
That you so spurned, without a moment's thought,  
What misbecame your knighthood. I was glad ;  
But things go all awry ; we meet once more !

*Templar.* You know, then, why I come, though I myself  
Can hardly guess.

*Friar.* Perhaps, have thought it over,  
Perhaps discovered that the Patriarch  
Was after all i' the right ; that self and honour  
His project might ensure you, that a foe  
Remains a foe, even if he seven times  
Had proved our angel. So with flesh and blood  
You have ta'en counsel, and now come again  
To offer service. God !

*Templar.* No, my good man !  
Be calm ; for this I come not ; not for this  
Would I consult the Patriarch. What I thought

On that point think I still, and would not lose  
For anything the world holds that regard  
Of which a man so honest, pious, kind  
Has deemed me worthy. No, I have but come  
To beg the Patriarch's counsel . . .

*Friar.* You—of him  
A Knight, consult a—priest. [*Looking timidly round.*]

*Templar.* Indeed, the affair  
Is rather priestly.

*Friar.* Yet you will not find  
The priest consult a knight, however knightly  
The business be.

*Templar.* 'Tis a priest's privilege  
To go astray, a privilege none of us  
Envies him much. In truth were it myself,  
Solely myself in question, and myself  
Solely to answer where were need of Patriarchs?  
But there be things I would do faultily  
By others' counsel rather than do well  
By my sole will. Besides, I now perceive  
Religion too is party, and who thinks  
Himself therein no partisan, that man  
Is in himself a party. This being so,  
'Tis right it should be.

*Friar.* That I speak not of,  
Not knowing if I understand my lord.

*Templar.* And yet ! (let's see what is 't I really want.  
Decree or counsel? Simple counsel or refined?)  
I thank you, friar ; thanks for your wise word.  
Why Patriarch? Be you my Patriarch?  
I'll rather ask the Christian in the Patriarch  
Than Patriarch in Christian. Now the question—  
The matter is . . .

*Friar.* No further, sir, no further !  
To what good end? Surely my lord mistakes me.  
Who knows too much, has the more care ; for me  
One care's enough and more. O good ! see yonder,  
There comes, for my relief, the priest himself.  
Stay where you stand. He has already seen you.

## SCENE II

*The Patriarch, who comes up with priestly pomp by the one cloister ;  
and the foregoing*

*Templar.* I would avoid him. He's not at all my man !  
A portly, rosy, and most friendly prelate !  
And what a splendour !

*Friar.* You should only see him  
Going to court ; comes from a sick man now.

*Templar.* How Saladin must be abashed before him !

*Patriarch.* [*Approaching, makes a sign to the friar.*] Here !  
Surely that is the Templar. What would he ?

*Friar.* I know not.

*Patriarch.* [*Approaching him, whilst the friar and retinue retire.*]  
Well, sir Knight ! Am much rejoiced  
To see the brave young man ! Eh, you are still  
A stripling. Now, by help of God, therefrom  
Something might grow.

*Templar.* Scarce more, my reverend lord,  
Than what already is, and mayhap less.

*Patriarch.* I hope at least that such a pious knight,  
For the good and glory of dear Christendom  
And God's own cause, may flourish many years !  
That surely will not fail, if, as is due,  
Young valour hearken to the ripened wisdom  
Of age ? How else can I now serve my friend ?

*Templar.* With what to youth is wanting, that's with counsel.

*Patriarch.* O willingly ! if counsel but be taken.

*Templar.* And yet, not blindly ?

*Patriarch.* Who could ask it ? No,  
For verily none should cease to use his reason,  
God-given reason, in its proper sphere.  
Mark you, its proper sphere, not everywhere !  
O no ! As, for example, when God deigns,  
By one of His good angels—that's to say,  
Some servant of His word—suggest to us  
A means, in some uncommon way of action,  
The weal of Christendom and His great Church  
To further and establish, who shall dare  
Question, by reason, the decree of Him  
Who hath created reason, and to test  
The eternal law o' the Glory of the Heavens

By the small rules of what vain men call honour?  
Of this enough, enough. What is it, then,  
Whereon my lord now seeks our counsel?

*Templar.*

This :

Suppose, most reverend Father, that a Jew  
An only child possessed, a little maid,  
Whom he had reared up with the utmost care  
And in all kindness, loved as his own soul,  
And who most piously returned his love,  
And now 'twere whispered unto one of us  
This maiden was no daughter of the Jew;  
That he had chosen her in her infancy,—  
Bought, stolen—what you will, and that we learned  
The maiden was a Christian, and baptized;  
The Jew had only reared her as a Jewess,  
Let her remain a Jewess and his daughter;—  
Say, reverend Father, what were here to do?

*Patriarch.* I shudder. Yet before all else my lord explain  
Whether the case he pictures is a fact  
Or a hypothesis. That is to say,  
Whether my lord has but imagined this  
Or whether it has happened, and goes on.

*Templar.* I thought that were all one; I had but wished  
To know your Reverence' mind.

*Patriarch.*

*One!* look you, sir,

How wide the arrogant human intellect  
In spiritual things can err—Sir, no, no!  
For if the case proposed be but a sport  
O' the brain, it is not worth the taking pains  
To think it out in earnest. I leave the case  
To theatres, where oft such arguments  
Of *pro et con* are with the crowd's applause  
Handled at large. But if my lord have now  
No such stage-trifles in his mind, and if  
The case is fact, and in our diocese,  
Even in our city of Jerusalem,  
This thing has happened—then indeed—

*Templar.*

What then?

*Patriarch.* Then were the Jew without a day's delay  
To undergo the penalty which laws  
Both Papal and Imperial denounce  
For such an outrage, such a heinous crime.

*Templar.*

And that?



*Patriarch.* These laws I speak of for the Jew  
Who leads a Christian to apostasy  
Appoint the stake, the fire . . .

*Templar.* What, the dread flame?

*Patriarch.* And how much more to that most wicked Jew  
Who tears by violence a poor Christian child  
Out of the bond of baptism. Is not all  
We do to children violence? That's to say,  
Of course, excepting what the Church may do  
With children.

*Templar.* But say only if the child  
Save for the Jew's compassion, were but fallen  
A prey to hunger and to wretchedness?

*Patriarch.* It matters not! The Jew must burn. For better  
It were fallen here to utter misery  
Than be saved thus to its eternal loss.  
Besides, how dares the Jew to forestall God?  
Sure, without him God can save whom He will.

*Templar.* And also, I should think, in spite of him.

*Patriarch.* No matter! He must burn.

*Templar.* That touches me  
To the very heart! The rather that they say  
He has not brought the girl up in his faith  
So much as in no faith, and taught her of God  
No more, no less, than satisfies the reason.

*Patriarch.* No matter! He must burn, and were indeed  
On this one count worthy to burn three times.  
What! Let a child grow up without a faith?  
What! the great duty of Belief to leave  
Untaught to children? That is wickedness!  
I wonder much, sir Knight, that you yourself . . .

*Templar.* Most reverend lord, for what remains, I leave it,  
If God will, to the confessional . . . (*is going*).

*Patriarch.* What! not now  
Render account to me? The criminal,  
The Jew you'll leave unnamed? Not now and here  
Produce him? Well, I think I know the way!  
I'll straightway seek the Sultan. Saladin,  
In virtue of the sworn Capitulation,  
Which bears his seal, he must, he must protect us;  
Protect us in all rights and in all rules  
To our most holy faith and Church belonging.  
Praise be to God! we have th' Original,

We have his hand and seal. Yes, it is ours !  
 Easily, too, I'll make him understand  
 How perilous 'tis even for the State  
 To believe nothing ! Since all civil bonds  
 Are loosed, are torn asunder, when men dare  
 Have no belief . . . Away with such an outrage !

*Templar.* Pity, I cannot now with better leisure  
 Enjoy the wise discourse. I'm called to Saladin.

*Patriarch.* Indeed? . . . Well, now. . . . Now verily. . . .  
 Then, then. . . .

*Templar.* I will prepare the Sultan for your coming  
 If that be pleasing to your Reverence.

*Patriarch.* Oh !—ah !—I know my lord enjoys high favour  
 With Saladin ! I beg but to be named  
 With my devotion to him. I am driven  
 Evermore purely by the zeal of God.  
 Where I exceed, it is for Him. But will  
 My lord yet weigh the matter? True, is't not,  
 Sir Knight, that question of the Jew we spoke of  
 Was nothing but a problem? That's to say—

*Templar.* A problem.

[*Exit.*]

*Patriarch.* Which I notwithstanding mean  
 To fathom deeper, even to the ground ;  
 Yet that, again, were really a commission  
 For Brother Bonafides. Here, my son !

[*He speaks in going off to the friar.*]

### SCENE III

*A room in Saladin's Palace, into which a number of sacks are  
 brought by slaves, and placed side by side on the floor*

*Saladin, and soon thereafter Sittah*

*Saladin.* [*Coming in.*] Well, truly now, there seems no end of  
 that.

Is there still much to come?

*A Slave.* Still quite the half.

*Saladin.* Bear what remains to Sittah. Where's Al-Hafi?  
 Let him take charge of these forthwith. Or shall I  
 Send them to the old man's stronghold in the hills?  
 Here 'twill slip through my fingers. Though indeed  
 One does grow hard at last, and in the end  
 'Twill cost some art to extort one coin from me

Until at least the moneys out of Egypt  
Come to these lands, the destitute must find  
Elsewhere their bread. Alms at the Sepulchre,  
These must go on, or all the Christian pilgrims  
Withdraw with empty hands. If only I . . .

*Sittah.* What's this? What does this money here with me?

*Saladin.* Therewith repay yourself; the overplus  
Lay by for after needs.

*Sittah.* And is not yet  
Old Nathan with the Templar come to you?

*Saladin.* He seeks him everywhere.

*Sittah.* See what I've found  
In looking through my trinkets.

[*Showing him a small picture.*

*Saladin.* Ha! my brother!

That's he, 'tis he! *Was he, was he, alas!*  
Ah brave young hero, whom I lost so soon!  
My brother dear, wert thou beside me still,  
What had I not accomplished! Give me, *Sittah*,  
The picture; look, I know it instantly;  
He gave it to thy elder sister, *Lilla*,  
One morning when she would not let him go,  
Holding him close embraced. 'Twas the last day,  
The last that he rode out. I let him ride,  
Alone, alas! And *Lilla* died of grief,  
And never would forgive me, that alone  
I let him ride away. He came no more.

*Sittah.* Poor brother!

*Saladin.* But let be! God's will be done!

Once we shall all ride out and come no more.  
Besides—who knows? It is not death alone  
Frustrates our plans. He had his enemies,  
And many a time the strongest man succumbs  
Like the most weak. Be 't as it may with him;  
I must compare the picture with this Templar,  
And see perhaps how much my phantasy  
Deceived me.

*Sittah.* 'Twas for that I brought it. Yet  
Give it to me! 'Tis for a woman's eye  
To judge such niceties.

*Saladin.* [*To an usher who enters.*] Speak, who is there?  
The Templar? Let him enter!

*Sittah.* I'll sit here,

Out of your way, nor let my questioning looks  
Disturb him.

*[Sits aside on a sofa and lets her veil fall.]*

*Saladin.* Well, 'tis well ! (Now, for his voice !  
How will that prove ? The tone of Assad's voice  
Sleeps in my memory still, and can awake !)

#### SCENE IV

##### *The Templar and Saladin*

*Templar.* Dare I, thy prisoner, Sultan . . .

*Saladin.* Prisoner ?

To whom I make the gift of life, shall I  
Not also give him freedom ?

*Templar.* What fits thee  
To do, befits me best to hear, and not  
Presume beforehand. But yet, Sultan, thanks,  
Especial thanks to thee, for granted life  
Accords not with my nature or condition.  
'Tis at thy service always.

*Saladin.* Only use it  
Never against me. One more pair of hands  
Truly I need not grudge my enemy.  
But one heart more like thine I cannot spare.  
For in no point am I deceived in thee,  
Young hero ! Body and soul thou art my Assad.  
See ! I might ask thee, where this world of time  
Thou hast been hiding ? In what cave hast slept ?  
In what a Guinistan by what kind nurturer  
This flower has all this age been kept so fresh ?  
See ! I might call to your remembrance all  
We did long since in company, the woods we roamed,  
The gallops o'er the free uncumber'd ground,  
I might upbraid thee for that thou hast kept  
A secret from me, stolen an adventure from me :  
Yes, so I might, if only thee I saw  
And not myself as well. Now, let it be !  
Of this sweet dream remains so much of truth  
That in my autumn there blooms up again  
An Assad here. Knight, shall we have it so ?

*Templar.* Ay ! Whatsoever comes to me from thee,  
Be't what it will, is welcome to my soul.



*Saladin.* Let us try that forthwith ; wilt thou abide  
With me, about me? As Mussulman, as Christian,  
All one ! in the white cloak, or gaberdine,  
In turban or in helmet, as thou pleasest,  
All one to me ! I never have desired  
That one bark grow on all trees of the wood.

*Templar.* Else hardly should'st thou be what now thou art,  
The conqueror who would rather by God's grace  
Till his own field.

*Saladin.* Well, if thou think'st no worse  
Of me, then surely we are half agreed.

*Templar.* Nay, quite !

*Saladin.* [*Offering him his hand.*] A word ?

*Templar.* A man ! receive herewith  
More than thou could'st take from me. Wholly thine !

*Saladin.* Too much gain for one day. Too much, sir Knight.  
Came he not with thee ?

*Templar.* Who ?

*Saladin.* Thy Nathan.

*Templar.* No ;  
I came alone.

*Saladin.* Ah, what a deed was that of thine !  
And what a happy fortune that the deed  
Fell out to his advantage, that great man,

*Templar.* [*Coolly.*] O, yes !

*Saladin.* So cold ? Not so, young man ! When God  
Does a good deed through us, we must not be  
So cold, nor even for modesty appear  
To be.

*Templar.* Yet everything in this strange world  
Has many sides ! Of which 'tis often hard to tell  
How they are reconciled !

*Saladin.* Hold to the best,  
Only the best, and praise the Lord who knows  
Best how to reconcile them. But, young man,  
If you are so fastidious, then must I  
Be on my guard with you. Unhappily  
I am myself a thing of many sides  
Hard for me often to bring to harmony.

*Templar.* That grieves me ; for suspicion's not my failing,  
Nor ever was . . .

*Saladin.* Well, tell me, then, of whom  
Thou hast it now ? It almost seemed, of Nathan.

Mistrust of Nathan? Thou? Explain thyself!

Speak, give me earnest of thy confidence.

*Templar.* I've nothing against Nathan; 'tis myself  
Alone I'm vexed with.

*Saladin.* And for what?

*Templar.* That I

Have dreamt a Jew might once perchance unlearn

To be a Jew, and dreamt it, too, awake.

*Saladin.* Away with waking dreams—a vain vexation.

*Templar.* Thou know'st of Nathan's daughter, Sultan. What  
I did for her. I did . . . because I did.

Too proud to reap thanks where I had not sowed,

Day after day, disdainful, I refused

To see the girl again. Her sire was absent;

He came; he heard; he sought me out; he thanked me;

Expressed his hope I might approve his daughter;

Of prospects spoke, of future happy days.

Well, so I was talked over, came, saw, found

A maiden such . . . ah, Sultan, I'm ashamed!

*Saladin.* Ashamed? Ashamed! Why, that a Jewish girl

Should touch your heart; but that's all past, perhaps?

*Templar.* That 'gainst this passion my impetuous heart  
Stirred by the father's kind inviting words,

Should stand so feebly. Miserable drop,

I fell a second time into the fire.

For now I wooed, and now was I disdained.

*Saladin.* Disdained?

*Templar.* Well, the wise father did not straightway

Bid me begone. But the wise father first

Must make enquiry, must consider first. Of course!

Did I not do the like? Enquired, considered

I too not first, when she shrieked in the fire?

Why, certainly! God! 'tis a pretty thing

To be so wise and thoughtful!

*Saladin.* Now, now, come!

Have patience with an old man; thou'rt but young.

How long are these refusals, then, to last?

Will he perhaps demand of thee that thou

Shalt first become a Jew?

*Templar.* A Jew? Who knows?

*Saladin.* Who knows? Why, he who knows what Nathan is.

*Templar.* The superstition in which we grew up,

Doth not, because we see it as it is.

Lose, therefore, all its power upon our souls.

They are not all free men who mock their chains.

*Saladin.* Most wisely spoken ! But Nathan verily . . .

*Templar.* The worst of superstitions is to hold

One's own the most endurable.

*Saladin.* May be,

Still Nathan . . .

*Templar.* . . . which alone poor purblind men

Must trust, till they can stand the daylight, which

Alone . . .

*Saladin.* Yes, good ! But, Nathan ! Nathan's lot

Is no such weakness.

*Templar.* So I also thought !

If all the same this paragon of men

Were such a common Jew that he would seek

To seize on Christian babes to bring them up

As Jews—how then ?

*Saladin.* And who thus slanders him ?

*Templar.* The very girl

With whom he would decoy me, hope of whom

He would hold out as payment for the deed

I am not to have done for her in vain ;

This very girl is not his daughter—no

She is a Christian child, some castaway.

*Saladin.* Whom notwithstanding he'd withhold from you ?

*Templar.* [*Hotly.*] Will he or will he not ? He is found out.

This babbler of equality and tolerance

Found out ! And on the heels of this Jew wolf

In philosophic sheep's wool I shall put

Dogs that will undisguise him.

*Saladin.* [*Earnestly.*] Calmly, Christian !

*Templar.* What, calmly, Christian ! Jew and Mussulman

Will have but Jew and Mussulman ; shall Christian

Alone not dare make Christians ?

*Saladin.* Calmly, Christian !

*Templar.* [*Composedly.*] The weight of this reproach which Saladin

Crams in one word, I feel it, ah, could I

But know how Assad in my place had taken it.

*Saladin.* Not so much better ! Perhaps with as much rage !

But who so soon has taught thee even like him

To pierce me with a word ? And verily

If these things be exactly as thou sayest,

I cannot find in them my thought of Nathan.

Meanwhile he is my friend, and friends of mine  
Must not one with the other come to strife.  
Then, be advised, walk warily. Give him not  
A prey to the fanatics of your rabble !  
Stir not the pool ; vengeance on him your priests  
Would bind on me for duty. To no Jew,  
No Mussulman, be thou in vain a Christian !

*Templar.* 'Twere soon too late for that ; but I am warned  
Even by the bloodthirst of the Patriarch  
Who had in fancy chosen me for his tool.

*Saladin.* How ? cam'st thou first to him and not to me ?

*Templar.* Yes, in the storm of passion, in the whirl  
Of indecision. Pardon me. Now no more,  
I fear, wilt thou the features of thine Assad  
Trace in my countenance.

*Saladin.* Was it not  
This very fear that hurt ! Methinks, I know  
Error and virtue often dwell together.  
Go, seek for Nathan as he sought for thee,  
And bring him hither. 'Tis my part to bring you  
To reconciliation. For the maiden's sake  
Be serious, and be calm, for she is thine.  
Perhaps already Nathan understands  
That, even swine's flesh withheld, he has brought up  
A Christian child ! Go, find him.

*[The Templar goes out, and Sittah stands up.]*

## SCENE V

### *Saladin and Sittah*

*Sittah.* Strange, how strange !

*Saladin.* Is it not, Sittah ? Must not brother Assad  
Have been a bright and beauteous boy ? See here.

*[Showing the picture.]*

*Sittah.* If he was like this, and the Templar sat not  
For this dear picture. But, my Saladin,  
How could'st thou now forget to question him  
About his parents ?

*Saladin.* And most specially  
His mother ? if his mother never came  
Into this region ? What ?

*Sittah.* Be sure to ask him !



*Saladin.* O, nothing were more likely ! Assad was  
With Christian fair ones such a favourite  
And to fair Christians so devoted too,  
That once the story ran—but no, but no ;  
I will not speak of that. Enough, I have him  
Once more ! And will with all his faults  
And all the fancies of his tender heart,  
Receive him. Oh, this maiden that he loves  
Nathan must give him. Think'st thou not ?

*Sittah.* Not give him,  
Leave him.

*Saladin.* Certainly ! What right has Nathan,  
If he is not her father, over her ?  
He who preserved her in her mortal peril  
Alone can take the unknown father's rights.

*Sittah.* Then, Saladin, how if thou did'st straightway  
Take the girl to thee and withdrew her straightway  
From the illegal holder.

*Saladin.* Were that needful ?

*Sittah.* Not needful, truly. 'Tis my curious heart  
Alone that drives me to th' advice, because  
Of certain men I'm fain to know at once  
What kind of girl they love.

*Saladin.* Well, Sittah, send  
And have her brought to us.

*Sittah.* O, may I, brother ?

*Saladin.* Only, spare Nathan ! Nathan must by no means  
Believe that one would part the girl by force  
From him.

*Sittah.* Be not afraid of that.

*Saladin.* And I  
I must myself see where Al-Hafi hides.

## SCENE VI

SCENE : *The open court in Nathan's house, opposite the palm-tree grove, as in Scene I of Act I. Part of the wares and jewels lies unpacked, of which they are speaking*

*Nathan and Daja*

*Daja.* O, all are splendid ; choicest of the choice !  
O, everything as fits your generous hand.  
Where do they make this lovely silver stuff

Threaded with the gold tendrils? What's its cost?  
A wedding dress indeed! No queen could ask  
A better.

*Nathan.* Wedding dress? Why call it so?

*Daja.* Why, yes; of course you did not think of that  
In buying it. But, Nathan, verily  
That and nought else it is, a wedding dress  
As if bespoke. The white ground, an emblem  
Of innocence, the heavy golden threads,  
That wind about this ground in every part,  
Emblem of riches. See you? It is lovely.

*Nathan.* Why all this wit? A wedding dress for whom  
Do you thus emblemize so learnedly?  
Are you, then, bride?

*Daja.* I?

*Nathan.* Who, then?

*Daja.* I? Good God!

*Nathan.* Who, then? Whose wedding dress is this you prate  
of?

All this is yours, and for no other.

*Daja.* Mine?

Is meant for me? And is it not for Recha?

*Nathan.* What I have brought for Recha, they have packed  
Apart. Come, take your goods and chattels!

*Daja.* Templar!

Not I, were they the treasures of the world,  
I will not touch them till you swear to me  
To use the happy chance that Heaven has given you  
And will not give, perhaps, a second time.

*Nathan.* Make use? Whereof? A happy chance, of what?

*Daja.* O, this pretence of blindness! In two words,  
The Templar Knight loves Recha. Give her to him;  
Therewith at once your sin, your sin whereof  
I can no more keep silence, has an end.  
So will the girl come once again 'mongst Christians,  
Become once more that which she was and is.  
And you, for all the goodness you have shown us,  
For which our gratitude can never cease,  
Shall not have merely heaped up coals of fire  
On your own head.

*Nathan.* Ah! the old harp again  
But only fitted with another string  
That neither can be stilled nor kept in tune.

*Daja.* How so?

*Nathan.* I like this Templar, and would rather  
Recha had him than any in the world.

But yet . . . have patience with me yet a while.

*Daja.* Patience ! O Patience !—is not this your own  
Old harp again ?

*Nathan.* Only a few days' patience !

But look ! Who comes along ? Is't not a friar ?

Go, ask him what he wants.

*Daja.* What can he want ?

[*Goes up to him and asks.*]

*Nathan.* Give it—before he asks—(*aside* : Could I but come  
Closer the Templar, not exposing him  
The reason of my questions ! Which if told  
And the suspicion groundless, then for nothing  
I had staked my fatherhood.) What does he seek ?

*Daja.* He asks to speak with you.

*Nathan.* Well, let him come.

Go you meanwhile.

## SCENE VII

### *Nathan and the Friar*

*Nathan.* [*Aside.*] (How glad had I remained

My Recha's father. And, indeed, can I

Not yet remain so, tho' I lose the name ?

To her herself I should be so forever

Did she but know the joy that were to me.)

[*To Daja.*] Go ! What service can I do you, holy friar ?

*Friar.* Really, not much. It gives me joy at least

To find great Nathan well.

*Nathan.* You know me then ?

*Friar.* Why, yes ; who does not ? For so many men

You have left your imprint in their hands ;

'T has stood in mine these many, many years.

*Nathan.* [*Reaching for his purse.*] Come, friar, come ; I will  
renew the print.

*Friar.* Have thanks ! I should but steal it from a poorer ;

Nothing for me ! Permit me only to refresh

My own name in your memory. I can boast

To have laid something also in your hand

Not quite to be despised.

*Nathan.* Forgive me, then—

I am ashamed—say what was that? and take  
As my atonement seven times its worth.

*Friar.* But first of all hear now the reason why  
Only to-day is brought to my remembrance  
The pledge I trusted to you.

*Nathan.* Pledge entrusted?

*Friar.* Not long ago I lay an eremite  
On Quarantana, near to Jericho.  
There came a robber-band of Arabs, broke  
My little chapel down and my poor cell,  
And dragged me off, their prisoner. By good chance  
Escaped, hither I hied me to the Patriarch,  
To beg another little resting-place  
Where I could worship God in solitude  
Until my quiet end.

*Nathan.* Be brief, good friar!

I stand on coals. The pledge! The pledge entrusted me!

*Friar.* Forthwith, Sir Nathan. Well, the Patriarch  
Promised to find me settlement on Tabor  
So soon as place were vacant, bade meantime  
That I should dwell in cloister as lay-brother,  
Where now I am, sir Nathan, where I long  
A hundred times a day for Tabor. For  
The Patriarch employs me upon things  
That fill me with great loathing. For example:

*Nathan.* Quick, I beseech you!

*Friar.* Well, it comes, it comes!

Some one to-day has whispered in his ear,  
That somewhere hereabout there bides a Jew  
Who has brought up they say a Christian child  
As his own daughter.

*Nathan.* [*Taken aback.*] How?

*Friar.* But hear me out!

As he commissioned me, if possible,  
Forthwith to track this Jew; beside himself  
With rage before this horrid sacrilege,  
He deemed the sin against the Holy Ghost  
Which cannot be forgiven—that is, the sin  
That's held the greatest of all sins, altho',  
Thanks be to God! we're not exactly sure  
In what the sin consists—there all at once  
My conscience woke, and then there came the thought  
I might myself sometime have had the chance



To do th' unpardonable sin. Come, say ;  
Did once a groom just eighteen years gone by  
Bring you a little daughter three weeks old ?

*Nathan.* How ? what ? Well, frankly—it is true.

*Friar.* Ay, look upon me here. That groom am I.

*Nathan.* You are ?

*Friar.* The lord from whom I bro't you her  
Was, 'less I err, one lord Von Filnek. Wolf Von Filnek !

*Nathan.* Right ! Yes ; it was so.

*Friar.* For the mother died  
In bringing her to birth, and the sad father  
Was called all suddenly to march 'gainst Gaza,  
Where the poor worm could not accompany,  
So sent her unto you. And met I not  
With you in Darun ?

*Nathan.* Right, quite right !

*Friar.* It were  
No wonder if my memory should deceive me.  
I've had so many masters, and with him  
I served so short a term ; soon after this  
He dwelt at Ascalon ; he was to me  
Ever a gracious master.

*Nathan.* A man indeed !  
Whom I have much to thank for ; from my head  
Not once but many times he warded off  
The spear's thrust.

*Friar.* Beautiful ! More gladly, then,  
To your good care you took his little one.

*Nathan.* That you may well believe.

*Friar.* Where is it, then ?

You will not, surely, say the babe is dead ?  
O let it not be dead ! If only none  
Knows of the matter. There are other ways.

*Nathan.* What are these ways you mean ?

*Friar.* Come, Nathan, trust me !

For see, this is my notion ; if the good  
That I intend to do should touch too close  
On what is evil, rather I refrain  
From the good deed ; for what is ill we can  
Without much dubitation recognise,  
But not so well what's good. 'Twas natural,  
Quite natural, that if the Christian babe  
You meant to bring up well and happily

It should be as your own ; no unjust claim.  
Have you then done so, with a faithful love,  
With father-care, to be rewarded thus ?  
That rings not true to me. Surely more wise,  
More prudent had it been, by other's hand  
To have reared up the Christian little one  
In Christian faith ; but then you had not loved  
Your friend's dear babe. And tender babes need love,  
Were 't even a wild beast's love, in their first years,  
More than they need our Christianity.  
For Christianity there's always time  
If the girl only sound in body and soul  
Grows up before your eyes, then in God's sight  
What she was first, remains she. And has not  
The Christian doctrine, after all, been built  
Upon the Jewish ? It has often vexed me,  
Has often verily cost me tears to think  
That Christians could so utterly forget  
The Lord of their Redemption was a Jew.

*Nathan.* Good brother, you must be my advocate  
If hatred and hypocrisy should rise  
Against me for one act—ah, for one act !  
You only, you alone must know of it.  
But take the secret with you to your grave !  
For never yet did vanity persuade me  
To tell it to another. To you alone  
I tell it. Pious simpleness alone  
Shall hear it. For simplicity alone  
Can understand the wondrous recompense  
The godly man may earn for loving deeds.

*Friar.* I see you moved, a tear stands in your eye.

*Nathan.* You met with me at Darun with the babe,  
Perchance you know not that three days before  
In Gath the Christians murdered every Jew,  
Man, woman, child of them ; perchance know not,  
That among these my wife, and with her, too,  
Seven hopeful sons were numbered, seven sons,  
Who in my brother's house had taken refuge,  
Were all together burned.

*Friar.* My God, my God !

*Nathan.* And when you came I'd lain three days and nights  
In dust and ashes before God and wept.  
Wept ? More ; had pleaded, argued it with God,

Raged, stormed, and cursed me and the world ;  
Sworn to all Christians and their faith a hate  
Unquenchable—

*Friar.* Ah, I can well believe it !

*Nathan.* Yet reason by degree came back to me.

She spoke with gentle voice, “ And yet God is !  
This, too, is the decree of God ! Well, then,  
Come, practise what thou long hast understood ;  
Which of a surety is not harder than  
It is to understand, if thou but wilt.  
Rise up.” I rose and cried to God, “ I will !  
If thou wilt that I will ! ” And at that moment  
Did you dismount and handed me the babe  
Wrapt in your mantle. What you told me then  
And what I answered, I’ve forgotten—quite,  
Only this much I know : I took the child,  
Laid it upon my couch, kissed its soft cheek,  
Kneeled on the ground, and sighed “ O God, for seven  
Already one Thou givest ! ”

*Friar.* Nathan ! Nathan !

You are a Christian ! By God, you are a Christian !  
No truer ever was !

*Nathan.* Happy for us,  
That what to you makes me a Christian, so  
Makes you to me a Jew. But let us not  
Thus make each other weak. Here we must act !  
And though a sevenfold love hath bound me fast  
To this lone stranger maiden, though the thought  
Already kills me that once more in her  
I am to lose my sons—if Providence  
Again require her of me—I obey !

*Friar.* ’Tis finished ! Even the course I have longed  
To prompt you to, your own good heart has chosen.

*Nathan.* Yet it must be no rash first-comer think  
To tear her from me !

*Friar.* No, truly, God forbid !

*Nathan.* Whoso hath not a greater right than I,  
Must have at least an earlier. . . .

*Friar.* Verily !

*Nathan.* Which blood and Nature warrant.

*Friar.* Even so,  
That’s my thought, too.

*Nathan.* Come, then, name me the man

Who stands to her related, brother or uncle,  
Cousin, or by what other tie of blood ;  
From him I'll not withhold her—her so fit,  
Created, reared, to be the ornament  
Of any house or any faith on earth.  
I hope, of this your master and his kin  
That you know more than I.

*Friar.* No, hardly that,  
Good Nathan, you've already heard how short  
My time of service with him.

*Nathan.* Yet at least  
You surely know of what house or what race  
Her mother was? Was she, too, not a Stauffen?

*Friar.* Quite possible. Indeed, I think 'twas so.

*Nathan.* Was not her brother, that's Conrad von Stauffen,  
A Templar?

*Friar.* Yes, unless my memory cheats me.  
But hold ! It comes to me I have a book,  
A tiny book belonging to my master,  
Still in my hands ; I drew it from his bosom  
When he was laid in earth at Ascalon.

*Nathan.* Well?

*Friar.* 'Tis a book of prayers ; a breviary, we call it.  
This, tho't I, may a Christian man still use  
Unshamed—though really I—I cannot read——

*Nathan.* No matter ! Tell me more.

*Friar.* In this small book  
First leaf and last, written in his own hand,  
There are inscribed the names of all his kin.

*Nathan.* O blessed news ! Go ! run ! fetch me the volume.  
I'll buy it from you with its weight in gold,  
And add a thousand thanks. O hasten ! run !

*Friar.* Right willingly—But it's in Arabic  
All that my master wrote in't.

[*Exit.*

*Nathan.* That's all one.  
But bring it only. God ! if yet I might  
Keep the dear child, and such a son-in-law  
Win in addition ! if I might ! But now  
Let be what will be. Who can it have been  
Played the informer with the Patriarch?  
I must not fail to ask. Could it be Daja ?



## SCENE VIII

*Daja and Nathan*

*Daja.* [*Entering in haste, agitated.*] Nathan, only think !

*Nathan.* Well, what has happened ?

*Daja.* The poor child

Was fearfully alarmed when she was called—

She has been sent for . . .

*Nathan.* Who ? The Patriarch ?

*Daja.* The Princess Sittah, sister of the Sultan.

*Nathan.* And not the Patriarch ?

*Daja.* No, Sittah ! Hear you not ?

The Princess Sittah sends and bids her come.

*Nathan.* Whom ? Recha ? Well, if Sittah sends for her,

And not the Patriarch . . .

*Daja.* Why think of him ?

*Nathan.* Have you of late not heard from him ? In truth ?

Nor whispered to him something ?

*Daja.* I ? to him ?

*Nathan.* Where are the messengers ?

*Daja.* They stand without.

*Nathan.* Then for precaution I myself will see them.

Come you ! If only nothing lurks behind,

From him.

[*Exit.*

*Daja.* And I—I fear quite other things.

Forsooth, an only daughter of a Jew

So rich as Nathan is, were no ill match

Even for a Mussulman. It is over,

All over with the Templar, unless I

Can dare the second step and to herself

Discover who she is. Courage, my heart !

Let me but use the moment well, when next

I have her by myself, and that may be

At once, when I accompany her. A first hint

At random dropped can do at least no harm.

Yes, yes ! 'tis now or never ! Boldly on ! [*Follows Nathan.*

## ACT V—SCENE I

*Room in Saladin's Palace, to which the sacks of money were borne,  
where they still lie*

*Saladin, and soon thereafter several Mamelukes*

*Saladin.* [*In entering.*] There stands the gold then still. And  
none knows where

To find Al-Hafi, who most probably  
Is somewhere set a fixture at the chess  
Ev'n of himself oblivious, and if so

Why not of me? But, patience! Ho, what now?

*A Mameluke.* The wished-for tidings, Sultan! Sultan, joy!  
The caravan is come from Kahira;  
Safely arrived, with seven years' tribute drawn  
From plenteous Nile.

*Saladin.* Bravo, my Ibrahim!  
Thou art indeed a welcome messenger!  
Ha! Ha! at last! at last! Your Sultan's thanks  
For the good news.

*Mameluke.* [*Waiting.*] (Well then, come on with it.)

*Saladin.* Why waitest? Thou mayst go.

*Mameluke.* And nothing more  
By way of welcome?

*Saladin.* What?

*Mameluke.* To messenger  
No message-fee? Then I should be the first  
Saladin learned i' th' end to pay with words.  
This is itself a name: To be the first  
With whom he played the niggard!

*Saladin.* Take thou then  
One of the sacks there.

*Mameluke.* No, not now! Thou might'st  
Wish to bestow them all on me.

*Saladin.* What pride!  
Come here! There hast thou two.—In earnest? Going?  
Out-do me in your magnanimity?  
For sure it costs thee much more to decline  
Than me to give. O Ibrahim! What evil chance  
Should thus befall me, thus, so short a time  
Before my going hence, to change my nature?  
Will Saladin not die as Saladin?  
Then neither must he live as Saladin.

*2nd Mameluke.* Ho ! Sultan !

*Saladin.* If thou comest to announce . . .

*2nd Mameluke.* The caravan from Egypt is arrived !

*Saladin.* I know it.

*2nd Mameluke.* Came I then too late ?

*Saladin.* Wherefore

Too late ? Take for good-will one or two sacks.

*2nd Mameluke.* Say three.

*Saladin.* I see that you can reckon ! Take them—

*2nd Mameluke.* There still will come a third, if come he can !

*Saladin.* How so ?

*2nd Mameluke.* How so ? Most like he broke his neck !

We three were watching at the water-gate.

No sooner sighted we the caravan

Than each man sprang and hasted, sinews strained,

Up the long road. The foremost fell, and I

Won to the front and kept it till we reached

The City, but there Ibrahim, the scamp,

Knows street and alley better.

*Saladin.* O, he fell !

Was hurt, perhaps ! Go, friend, ride out to meet him.

*2nd Mameluke.* That certainly I will, and if he live

Half of these sacks I'll gladly render him.

[*Exit.*

*Saladin.* See, what a gallant, noble carle even he !

And who but me can boast such Mamelukes ?

And were it not permitted me to think

That my example helps them ? Perish the thought

That at the last they must accustom them

To quite another sort.

*3rd Mameluke.* Hail to thee, Sultan !

*Saladin.* Art thou the man who fell ?

*3rd Mameluke.* No, lord, I come

To tell thee Emir Mansor, leader of

The caravan, has dismounted.

*Saladin.* Bring him in !

Ah, he is here !

## SCENE II

### *Emir Mansor and Saladin*

*Saladin.* Welcome, my Emir ! Well,

How has all gone ?—Oh, Mansor, Mansor, long

We've waited thee . . .

*Mansor.* This letter will inform you,  
What unrest in Thebais first your captain,  
Your Abdul Kassem, had to quell by battle,  
Ere we could venture to begin the journey,  
The march thereafter I did expedite  
As much as possible—

*Saladin.* Trust you for that !  
And now, good Mansor, take without delay . . .  
This, too, thou wilt do gladly . . . wilt collect  
Fresh escort, for at once thou must away  
On further travel, carry the best part  
Of this rich treasure to my father's hold  
On Lebanon.

*Mansor.* Most gladly will I do it !

*Saladin.* And take thou not an escort over weak.  
On Lebanon things are not quite so safe.  
You've heard? The Templars are once more afoot.  
Be well upon your guard ! But come—where halts  
The train? for I must see it, and myself  
Set all in motion. Then I go to Sittah.

### SCENE III

*The Palms near Nathan's house, where the Templar is walking up  
and down*

*Templar.* His house I will not enter ; I'm resolved—  
He'll show himself at last. How quickly, gladly,  
They used to notice me at this same spot.  
But I may still survive it, if he cease  
To hunt me as he used when I came near.  
Hm ! I am vexed at heart. What is the cause  
Of my embitterment? Sure, he said " yes " ;  
Nor ever yet has he denied me. Saladin  
Hath promised, too, to bring him to accord.  
Maybe the Christian roots in me more deep  
Than does the Jew in him. Who knows himself?  
How otherwise should I so grudge to him  
The little prey he took occasion once  
To stalk down in the Christians' hunting-ground?  
No little prey, indeed ! That noble creature !  
Creature, but whose? O surely not the slave's  
Who set afloat upon life's weary shore



The block, and then made off. Surely the artist's  
Rather, who in the abandoned block perceived  
The god-like form within and bro't it forth  
By his so potent art? Recha's true father  
Remains, spite of the Christian who begot her,  
For evermore this Jew. So when I think  
Of her as merely Christian girl, without  
All graces which she only could derive  
From such a Jew's upbringing, what, my heart,  
Could then in her be found to please thee so?  
Nothing, or little! Even her smile, were that  
More than the soft, sweet quivering of a muscle;  
Perchance what makes her smile not worth the charm  
In which it clothes itself upon her lips;—  
No; not her smile even! For I've seen it spent  
In greater charm on idle jest and folly,  
On mockery, on flatterer and admirer.  
Has it then taken me captive, and inspired  
The wish to flutter life away in its  
Sweet sunny beams? In faith, I cannot tell.  
And yet I am at odds with him who gave,  
Yes, gave alone this higher worth to her,—  
How so, and why? Have I then earned that laugh  
Of Saladin at parting? Bad enough  
To think that Saladin conceived me so!  
How small he must have thought me, despicable!  
And all about a girl. It must not be,  
Curd, Curd, it shall not be. Then turn and take  
Another road. May it not be that all  
That Daja spoke was only idle talk,  
And difficult to prove?—See, there at last  
He comes, in eager converse, from his house!  
Converse, with whom? With him? with my old friar?  
Ha! then he knows it all, and is betrayed  
Already to the Patriarch. What have I wrought  
In my perversity! O that one spark,  
One little flash of passion, should avail  
To burn away our brain's best elements!  
Resolve and quickly what must now be done,  
And here aside I'll wait them, if perhaps  
By happy chance the friar quit his presence.

## SCENE IV

*Nathan and the Friar*

*Nathan.* [*As he approaches.*] Once more, good friar, take my utmost thanks !

*Friar.* And you the like, sir !

*Nathan.* I? from you? for what?

For my self-will, that I thus push upon you  
What you've no use for? Yes, if but your will  
Had yielded to me, but with all your heart  
You strove against being rich, more rich than I.

*Friar.* The book, besides, does not belong to me,  
But to the daughter :—it is surely hers,  
The daughter's sole paternal heritage.—  
Of course, she has yourself. And God forbid  
That you should ever rue t' have done so much  
For her.

*Nathan.* That I shall never, never ! Fear not that.

*Friar.* Ah but ! the Templars and the Patriarchs . . .

*Nathan.* Whatever harm they do me cannot make  
Me rue what I have done : say nought of that !  
And are you then so perfectly assured  
It was a Templar set the Patriarch on?

*Friar.* Can hardly be another. For a Templar  
Shortly before was with him, what I heard  
Seemed to confirm it.

*Nathan.* There is only one  
In all Jerusalem, and him I know—  
He is my friend, a frank and noble youth.

*Friar.* Quite so ; 'tis he ! But what one is, and what  
The world makes of one, are not quite the same.

*Nathan.* Alas ! 'tis true !—Let whomsoever do  
His worst or best ! For, friar, with your book  
I can defy them all and go straightway  
Therewith to Saladin.

*Friar.* Much luck to you,  
And now I'll say farewell.

*Nathan.* And even yet  
You have not seen her—Come again and soon.  
If only nought come to the Patriarch's ear—  
Yet what of that? To-day tell what you please.

*Friar.* Not I ! Farewell.

[*Exit.*]

*Nathan.* Forget us not, my brother !  
God ! I could sink down, under open heavens,  
Upon my knees ! to see the threatening knot  
That often has appalled me of itself  
Unloosen ! God ! How light I feel me now  
Since there is nothing further in the world  
I have to hide ! and even as in Thy sight  
Can walk in men's sight too, who judge a man,  
Must judge, by deeds alone.

## SCENE V

*Nathan and the Templar, who comes forward to meet him*

*Templar.* Ho ! wait me, Nathan ; take me with you.

*Nathan.* What !

Sir Knight, I thought to meet you at the Sultan's,  
Where have you hid yourself ?

*Templar.* O, we have missed  
Each other ; do not take it ill.

*Nathan.* Not I,

But Saladin . . .

*Templar.* You had just left his presence . . .

*Nathan.* You saw him, then ? 'Tis well.

*Templar.* It is his wish

To speak with us together.

*Nathan.* All the better,

Come, I was now upon my way to him.

*Templar.* May I ask, Nathan, who it was that now  
Parted with you ?

*Nathan.* You do not know the man, then ?

*Templar.* Was't not that honest father, the lay-brother,  
The good retriever that the Patriarch  
Likes to make use of ?

*Nathan.* Maybe ; he is lodged  
Certainly with the Patriarch.

*Templar.* No bad trick,  
To send simplicity to clear the way  
For rascaldom.

*Nathan.* Ah, yes, the silly, not the pious.

*Templar.* No Patriarch believes in piety.

*Nathan.* For him

I would go surety. He will give no aid

To 's Patriarch in any villainy.

*Templar.* At least he so professes. But did he  
Say nothing to you about me?

*Nathan.* Of you?

Well, not indeed of you by name; in fact  
He hardly knows your name.

*Templar.* Hardly, says he?

*Nathan.* Of a certain Templar, to be sure, he did  
Say something . . .

*Templar.* What was it?

*Nathan.* Something by which

He once for all cannot mean you, my friend.

*Templar.* Who knows? But let us hear it.

*Nathan.* 'Twas that one  
Accused me to the Patriarch.

*Templar.* Accused you?

Accused? That is, with his good leave, a lie!

Now hear me, Nathan! I am not the man

To shuffle and equivocate. No, what

I have done, I have done. Nor am I either

One to defend as well done all he does.

Why should I die for shame of one sole fault,

Having the firm resolve to make it good?

And know I not, forsooth, how far repentance

May yet advance a man? Hear me, Nathan!

I am in truth the Templar named by him,

The friar, am he who did accuse you, doubtless,—

And you yourself know what it was that vexed me,

What made the blood boil in my every vein,

Fool that I am! I came, my heart aflame

To throw me in your arms. How you received me!

How coldly, how lukewarmly, which is worse,

Much worse than coldly; and how sedulous

You were to show me out with formal phrase;

And how for answer you did stave me off

With questions all irrelevant, that now,

Even now I cannot think of and be calm—

Still hear me, Nathan! In my yeasty mood

Came Daja, whispering to my willing ear,

And threw your cherished secret at my head,

Which seemed to me to hold the explanation

Of your mysterious bearing.

*Nathan.* How so? Why?



*Templar.* Still bear with me ! Yes, I imagined then  
That what one day you captured from the Christians,  
You would not willingly lose to a Christian—  
And the thought came to me to put the knife  
To your throat straightway. . . .

*Nathan.* Templar, was it good ?

*Templar.* Yet hear me, Nathan ! O without a doubt  
I then did wrong ; there was no guilt in you.  
That foolish Daja knows not what she speaks,  
She hates you, and only seeks to entangle you  
In dangerous business—O maybe, maybe !  
But I'm a fool, raving now here, now there,  
Now doing far too much, now far too little—  
And so it maybe now. Forgive me, Nathan.

*Nathan.* If this is what you think me.

*Templar.* In a word,  
I sought the Patriarch—but have not named you.  
That is a lie, I say again. I put the case  
Just as a general problem, so to have  
His mind upon it. Even that, I know,  
I might have left unspoken ; better so !  
For knew I not the Patriarch already,  
The knave he is ? and could I not myself  
Have bro't it home to you ? How need I, then,  
Bring the defenceless maiden to the danger  
Of losing such a father ?—Well, what next ?  
The Patriarch's knavery, ever the same,  
Has bro't me to myself the shortest way—  
For, hear me, Nathan ; listen, and hear me out !  
Granted, he knew your name—even what of that ?  
He's only able to take the girl from you  
If she be yours alone and not another's ;  
From *your* house only can he drag her off  
Into his cloisters. So give her to me,  
Give her to me only ; and let him come.  
Ha ! let him try that game, to take my wife  
From me.—Give her to me and quickly. Whether  
She be your daughter now, or she be not !  
A Jewess, or a Christian or what else !  
All's one ! All's one ! I will not, either now  
Or in my life henceforward, question you  
Upon the matter. Be it as it will.

*Nathan.* Perhaps you fancy it were very needful

For me to hide the truth?

*Templar.* Be it as 't will !

*Nathan.* I have not yet to you or any man  
Who had the right to know denied the fact  
That she's a Christian born, and is no more  
Than foster-daughter to me. Wherefore, then,  
You say, remains it undisclosed to her?  
For that—to her alone need I excuse—

*Templar.* And such excuse you need not even with her—  
Grant to her yet that she may never look  
With other eyes upon you. Spare her yet,  
O spare her the disclosure. You alone,  
You only, have to deal with her as yet.  
Give her to me, I pray you, Nathan, I  
Alone can save you her a second time,  
And will save.

*Nathan.* Ah ! You could ! You could ! but now  
No longer can. It is too late for that.

*Templar.* How so, too late?

*Nathan.* Thanks to the Patriarch . . .

*Templar.* The Patriarch? Thanks? thank him? For what?  
Does he wish to earn our thanks? For what?

*Nathan.* That we now know to whom she is related,  
Now know to whose hands she can be delivered.

*Templar.* He who would thank him for yet further good,  
Thank him for this !

*Nathan.* 'Tis from those hands that now  
You must receive her, not from mine.

*Templar.* Poor Recha !  
How all things thrust at you, poor Recha ! What  
Were luck for other orphans still becomes  
Ill-luck for you—and, Nathan, where are they,  
These kinsfolk ?

*Nathan.* Where they are ?

*Templar.* And who they are ?

*Nathan.* A brother in especial has been found  
It is to him that you must sue for her.

*Templar.* A brother ! What is he, this brother ? Soldier  
Or churchman ? Let me hear what 'tis I may  
Promise myself.

*Nathan.* Of these two I fancy  
He's both or neither. As yet I cannot say  
I know him well.

*Templar.* And otherwise?

*Nathan.* Most worthy!

One with whom Recha will agree right well.

*Templar.* But yet, a Christian! Now, really at times

I hardly know what I should think of you:—

Take it not ill, friend Nathan—Will she not

Be forced to play the Christian, among Christians?

And what for long enough she will have played,

She will at last become. Will not the tares

Spring up to choke the pure wheat you have sown?

And that scarce troubles you. For, spite of that,

You still can say that they'll agree right well,

Sister and brother?

*Nathan.* So I think and hope!

If she miss aught with him, does she not know

She still has you and me, her friends for ever?

*Templar.* What can she miss with him? Will not this brother

With food and clothing, finery and sweetmeats

Richly enough provide her? What then more

Can little sister want? Oh, certainly,

A husband! Well, him too, him too will brother

Find in good time! One's always to be found.

The better the more Christian! Nathan! Nathan!

O what a perfect angle you had formed,

Whom others now will have the chance to spoil!

*Nathan.* No fear of that: the man will prove himself

Worthy of all our love.

*Templar.* O say not that,

Of my love say not that, which fills my soul

As nothing small or great can share with it:

But stop! Doth she suspect already aught

Of what is coming?

*Nathan.* Maybe, although I know not

Whence she might learn it.

*Templar.* That's all one! She shall,

She must, in either case, know first from me

What 'tis her fate portends—And so my thought

Never to see her, or speak with her at all

Till I could call her mine—that thought is dead.

I hasten . . .

*Nathan.* Stop, whither so fast?

*Templar.* To her!

To see whether this maiden soul is not

Yet Man enough, to take the one resolve  
Worthy of her.

*Nathan.* Which is?

*Templar.* This, now no more

To ask of you or of her brother aught—

*Nathan.* And?

*Templar.* Then to follow me, even if she had

Thereby to be wife to a Mussulman.

*Nathan.* Remain : you will not meet her, she is now

With Sittah, sister of the Sultan.

*Templar.* Why?

Since when?

*Nathan.* And if you'd find at the same place

The brother that we spoke of,—come with me.

*Templar.* The brother? which? Sittah's or Recha's, say?

*Nathan.* Why, both mayhap. Come only : I pray you, come !

#### SCENE VI

*In Sittah's harem. Sittah and Recha engaged in conversation*

*Sittah.* How glad I am to know you, my sweet girl !

But look not so oppressed, so shy and timid !

Be merry. Come, speak freely ; I'm your friend.

*Recha.* O Princess . . .

*Sittah.* No ! don't call me Princess, call me

Sittah, your friend, your sister, call me rather

Your little mother—That's what I should like

To be to you—so young, so good, so clever !

What you must know, how much you must have read !

*Recha.* Read ? Sittah, now you mock your silly sister ;

Why, I can hardly read.

*Sittah.* “Hardly.” Romancer !

*Recha.* My father's hand a little. But I thought

You spoke of books.

*Sittah.* Why, certainly ; of books.

*Recha.* Now, I find books so really hard to read.

*Sittah.* In earnest ?

*Recha.* Quite. My father loves not much

That cold book-learning, which dead letters cram

Into the brain.

*Sittah.* What ! is it so ? Indeed,

He's not far wrong. And yet the thousand things



You know !

*Recha.* I only know them from his mouth,  
My father, and of most of them I still could tell  
How, where and why he taught me.

*Sittah.* Everything  
Cleaves better so, the whole soul learns at once.

*Recha.* I'm sure that Sittah, too, has read but little.

*Sittah.* How so? If so, I am not proud of it.

Why think you so? What reason—now speak out !

*Recha.* You are so genuine, so unaffected, so . . .

Well, always like yourself. . . .

*Sittah.* Well?

*Recha.* Books, you know,

Too seldom leave us so, my father says—

*Sittah.* Ah, what a man your father is !

*Recha.* Ah, yes !

*Sittah.* How sure his hand and eye, they never fail.

*Recha.* 'Tis true, 'tis true, and this my father . . .

*Sittah.* What ails you, dear one?

*Recha.* O my father !

*Sittah.* God !

You weep !

*Recha.* My father—father—it must out !

My heart is bursting—give me air—I faint !

*[Throws herself, weeping unrestrainedly, at Sittah's feet.]*

*Sittah.* Child, what has happened? *Recha !*

*Recha.* I must lose him !

*Sittah.* You? lose him? What means this? Dear child, be  
calm !

O never, never ! Rise, and tell me all.

*Recha.* In vain your vow is made to be my friend,  
My sister.

*Sittah.* So I am, I am. Only rise up.

Else must I call for help.

*Recha.* *[Controlling herself and rising.]* Forgive ! forgive !

My pain made me forgetful who you are.

In Sittah's presence no moaning is of use,

And no despair. Reason calm and cold

Alone has power upon her spirit. He

Whose cause has that to aid him will prevail.

*Sittah.* I understand not.

*Recha.* O do not suffer it,

My friend, my sister, never suffer it—

Another father to be forced upon me !

*Sittah.* Another father ! forced upon you ? Who can  
Do that or even think of doing it, my dear one ?

*Recha.* Who ? 'Tis my good, my wicked Daja, thinks  
And more than thinks the deed, can do it. Ah !  
You do not know her, this my good, my wicked Daja.  
Well, God forgive it her—and recompense her !  
She has shown me so much good, and so much evil.

*Sittah.* Evil to you. Then verily little good  
Can live in her.

*Recha.* Oh, yes, much good, much good—

*Sittah.* Who is she ?

*Recha.* 'Tis a Christian lady who  
Has tended me from childhood, cherished me  
With care so tender that I never missed  
A mother's love. God make it good to her !  
And yet distressed me too, and tortured me !

*Sittah.* And why, and in what matter ? Tell me, how ?

*Recha.* Ah ! the poor lady—let me tell you all—  
She is a Christian—tortures me from love ;  
Is one of those enthusiasts who dream  
They know, they only, the true way to God—

*Sittah.* I understand . . .

*Recha.* And feel themselves compelled  
To lead all others who have missed this way  
Back to the same—and scarcely can do other—  
For be it true this way alone can be  
The way of safety, can they be content  
To see their friends upon another road,  
Which leads to loss, to everlasting loss ?  
Thus is it possible, for the self-same people,  
And at the self-same time, to love and hate.  
Yet even this is not what forces from me  
Bitter complaint against her. For her sighs,  
Her warnings and her prayers, her menaces—  
I could have gladly borne—yes, willingly,  
For they have brought ever to my mind such thoughts  
As do one good. And whom does it not flatter  
At heart to find oneself so prized and dear  
To whomsoever that they can't bear the thought  
Of everlasting severance.

*Sittah.* That is true !

*Recha.* But there is something else that goes too far,

For which I have no mental remedy,  
Which patience cures not, nor reflection soothes,  
Nothing !

*Sittah.* What's that ?

*Recha.* What she just now disclosed.

*Sittah.* Disclosed, and now ?

*Recha.* This very moment did.

On our way here we passed a Christian temple,  
A ruin. Suddenly she stood still and seemed  
To struggle with herself, with tear-dimmed eyes  
She looked up first to Heaven, and then on me.  
"Come, dear," she said at last, "the shorter way  
Which passes through this temple will we take."  
She goes ; I follow her ; my awe-struck gaze  
Fixed on the tottering ruin. Now again  
She stands ; I look and find myself with her  
On sunken steps of an altar all-decayed. . . .  
How think you 'twas with me, when with hot tears  
And clasped hands she fell before me there,  
Lying at my feet. . . .

*Sittah.* O Recha, my poor child !

*Recha.* And by the Almighty, who so many a prayer  
Had heard there, and so many a wonder wrought  
Besought me to have pity on myself—  
At least to pardon, if she must disclose  
The claim her church had on me—she went on—

*Sittah.* O you unhappy one—'twas my foreboding !

*Recha.* I was of Christian blood ; had been baptized ;  
And was not Nathan's daughter—he not my father !  
God ! God ! he not my father ! *Sittah ! Sittah !*  
See me again all prostrate at your feet. . . .

*Sittah.* Recha ! Not now ; rise up.—My brother comes !

## SCENE VII

### *Saladin and the foregoing*

*Saladin.* What's wrong, here, Sittah ?

*Sittah.* She is not herself.

*Saladin.* Who is it ?

*Sittah.* Ah, you know . . .

*Saladin.* Our Nathan's daughter ?

What's wrong?

*Sittah.* Come to yourself, my child ! The Sultan . . .

*Recha.* [*Dragging herself on her knees to the Sultan's feet, her head bent to the ground.*] I rise not, cannot rise, and cannot see  
The Sultan's countenance, cannot behold  
The bright reflection of eternal justice  
And goodness in his eyes, and on his brow,  
Until . . .

*Saladin.* Stand up !

*Recha.* Until he promise me . . .

*Saladin.* Come, then, I promise, be it what it will.

*Recha.* Not more nor less, to leave to me my father  
And me to him ! Nor know I not who else  
Desires to be my father or can desire it.  
I do not want to know. But is 't alone  
The blood that makes the father, only blood?

*Saladin.* [*Raising her up.*] I see it all ! Who was so cruel, then,  
To put such fancies in your head. Is this,  
Then, quite already settled, and proved true?

*Recha.* O, surely ; Daja has it from my nurse.

*Saladin.* Your nurse?

*Recha.* Who dying told to her the secret.

*Saladin.* Oh, dying. Perhaps drivelling too? And were it  
Even true—You know, the blood, the blood alone  
Can never make the father, hardly makes  
The father of a beast, but gives at best  
The foremost right to earn the name indeed.  
Then be not yet affrighted—cast off fears !  
Hearken, what think you? When the fathers twain  
Contend for you, leave both, and take a third !  
Take me, then, for your father.

*Sittah.* Oh, yes, yes !

*Saladin.* A right good father I will be to you !  
But stop ! I've thought of something better still.  
What need have you of fathers, after all?  
Suppose they die? Let's look about in time  
For one who can keep step with us in living !  
Know you of none?

*Sittah.* Now, do not make her blush !

*Saladin.* That is exactly what I want to do :  
For blushing makes the ugliest beautiful,  
And will it not make fairer yet the fair?  
I have your father Nathan here by me



And one besides—bethink you, can you guess?

Hither? If you'll permit me only, Sittah?

*Sittah.* My brother!

*Saladin.* Will you blush before him now?

*Recha.* Before whom? Blushing?

*Saladin.* . . . Little Hypocrite!

Well, then, go pale instead! Even as you will

And can, too.

*[A female slave steps in and approaches Sittah.*

*What, already are they here?*

*Sittah.* Good; let them enter.—Brother, it is they.

### SCENE VIII AND LAST

*Nathan and the Templar to the foregoing*

*Saladin.* Welcome, my dear good friends! Nathan, to you,  
To you before all else 'tis duty and joy  
To tell you that as soon as pleases you,  
Your gold can be restored. . . .

*Nathan.* Nay, Sultan, nay!

*Saladin.* Yea, more, am now prepared to further you—

*Nathan.* Sultan!

*Saladin.* My caravan is here, and I am rich  
Beyond my hopes, richer than e'er I was.  
Come, tell me, is there no fine enterprise  
Where I can help you, something great? I know  
Of ready cash you cannot have too much,  
You merchant people!

*Nathan.* And why speak you first  
Of such a trifle? I see there an eye  
In tears; to dry them touches me more closely,

*[Goes to Recha.*

You've wept? And why—You still are mine?

*Recha.* My father!

*Nathan.* We understand each other: so, enough!  
Be cheerful; be composed. If still your heart  
Remains your own! And if no other loss  
Does threaten it; for sure your father is  
Still yours, unlost!

*Recha.* O no, no other loss!

*Templar.* No loss besides? Then I myself have cheated—  
What one fears not to lose, one never thought

That one has held or ever wished to hold—  
Let be !—let be ! Nathan, this alters all !  
O Saladin, we came at your command,  
But now I see I have misled you quite,  
Trouble yourself no more !

*Saladin.* Young man, again  
You puzzle me : and are we bound to read  
The riddle that you set ?

*Templar.* Sultan, you see,  
You hear, is 't not enough ?

*Saladin.* Ay, verily ;  
'Tis bad enough that you were not more sure  
Of what concerns you most.

*Templar.* I am sure *now* !

*Saladin.* He who presumes upon a good deed done,  
Takes it all back. What you have saved is not  
Therefore your own possession. Otherwise  
The thief whose greed bade plunge into the fire,  
He were your rival here !

[*Going to Recha, to lead her to the Templar.*

Come, dear maid,  
Come, judge him not so strictly. He would be  
Another, if he were less warm and proud :  
He would have let it be, the saving you.  
Set one thing 'gainst another. Make him shamed !  
Do that which would become him best to do,  
Confess your love to him ! offer yourself !  
And if he should disdain you, or forget  
How far, far more in this you do for him  
Than what he did for you. . . . What has he then  
Done for you ! Let himself be scorched a trifle !  
Is that so much ? . . . then say I he has nothing  
Of my dear brother's nature, of my Assad,  
He bears about his mask but not his heart.  
Come, dear one . . .

*Sittah.* Go, my dear one, go ! It is  
But little this—to tell your gratitude ;  
I call it nought.

*Nathan.* Stop, Saladin ! Stop, Sittah !

*Saladin.* You, too ?

*Nathan.* Here's one more still to speak a word. . . .

*Saladin.* Who questions that ? To such a foster-father  
A voice belongs of right ; yea, the first voice—

Hear me; I know the matter through and through.

*Nathan.* Nay, not yet all. I speak not of myself.

There is another, whom, O Saladin,

I beg you first to hear.

*Saladin.* And who is he?

*Nathan.* Her brother.

*Saladin.* Brother of Recha?

*Nathan.* Yes.

*Recha.* My brother? Have I indeed a brother?

*Templar.* Where?

Where is this brother? Is he here? 'Tis here

That I should meet him.

*Nathan.* Patience only!

*Templar.* [*Bitterly.*] He

Has found a father to her—will he not

Contrive to find a brother?

*Saladin.* Only that

Was wanting! Christian, such a low

Suspicion had not crossed my Assad's lips.

Good! But continue, Nathan! Pardon him!

*Nathan.* I do forgive him freely—who can say

What we in his place, at his age had thought?

[*Going to him in friendly manner.*]

Suspicion, Knight, must follow on distrust;

If you had only granted me to know

Your true name from the first . . .

*Templar.* How?

*Nathan.* You're no Stauffen!

*Templar.* Who am I, then?

*Nathan.* Your name's not Curd von Stauffen.

*Templar.* And what, then, is my name?

*Nathan.* 'Tis Len von Filnek.

*Templar.* What?

*Nathan.* See, you start!

*Templar.* With reason! Who says so?

*Nathan.* I; I, who more, much more, can tell you, but

Accuse you of no lie.

*Templar.* No?

*Nathan.* 'Twill may be

The other name is also yours of right.

*Templar.* That I should think!

(*Aside:* God gave that word to him.)

*Nathan.* For, you must hear—your mother was a Stauffen.

Her brother, he who brought you up from childhood,  
 To whom your parents trusted you in Germany  
 When, driven from it by the troubled skies,  
 They landed here for refuge—he was named  
 Conrad von Stauffen, may have made you child  
 Of his adoption. Is it long ago

Since you came hither with him? Lives he still?

*Templar.* What shall I say? It is so, truly, Nathan,  
 Himself is dead. I came here with the last  
 Reinforcement of our Order. But all this—  
 What of it—when we speak of Recha's brother?

*Nathan.* Your father . . .

*Templar.* How? Have you, then, known my father?  
 Him also?

*Nathan.* Yes, my much-loved friend he was—

*Templar.* He was your friend? Nathan, is 't possible?

*Nathan.* Called himself Wolf von Filnek; but was not  
 A German.

*Templar.* Know you that, too?

*Nathan.* Yes, he had  
 A German wife, and only for short time  
 Accompanied her to Germany. . . .

*Templar.* No more,  
 I beg—but Recha's brother? Recha's brother?

*Nathan.* Are you!

*Templar.* I? I her brother?

*Recha.* He my brother?

*Sittah.* Both of one house.

*Saladin.* One house!

*Recha.* [*Going towards him.*] Ah, brother mine!

*Templar.* [*Drawing back.*] Her brother!

*Recha.* It can't be, can't be, his heart

Knows nought of it.—We are impostors—God!

*Saladin.* [*To the Templar.*] Impostors? How? what think you?  
 can you think it?

Yourself are an impostor—all things false  
 In you—face, voice, and bearing! Nothing yours!  
 Not to know such a sister. Templar, go!

*Templar.* [*Approaching him humbly.*]

Misread not, Sultan, my astonishment!

Mistake not in a moment one in whom

You think that nought of Assad can be seen,

Both him and me!

[*Hastening to Nathan.*]



You give to me and take ;  
Both, Nathan, with full hands. No, no ; you give  
More than you take ! yes, infinitely more !

*[Falling on Recha's neck.]*

Dear sister, sister mine !

*Nathan.* Blanda von Filnek !

*Templar.* Blanda ? Blanda ? and not Recha ! no more

Your Recha ? God ! You disinherit her !

You give her back her Christian name and place,

You cast her off for me—O Nathan, Nathan !

Why should she thus atone—why, Nathan, why ?

*Nathan.* Atone ? for what ? My children, O my children !

Shall not my daughter's brother be my child,

He also, when he will ?

*[While he surrenders himself to their embrace, Saladin in restless amazement steps up to his sister.]*

*Saladin.* What say you, sister ?

*Sittah.* I am so moved to see them—

*Saladin.* And I before

Greater emotion still almost recoil—

Brace you against it firmly as you can.

*Sittah.* How ?

*Saladin.* Nathan, but one word with you, one word !

*[While Nathan approaches him, Sittah goes to the brother and sister to express her sympathy, and Nathan and Saladin whisper.]*

Hear me now, Nathan ! have you told them yet ?

*Nathan.* What ? That her father was no German born ?

*Saladin.* What was he, then ? What other land can claim him ?

*Nathan.* That's what himself would never trust me with :

Out of his lips I know no whit of that.

*Saladin.* And was he then no Frank, no Westerner ?

*Nathan.* O that he was not that, he freely granted.

He oftenest spoke Persian.

*Saladin.* Persian ! Persian !

What need I more assurance ? It was he !

*Nathan.* Who, then ?

*Saladin.* My brother—O quite certainly

My Assad, 'twas my Assad, without doubt.

*Nathan.* Well, since yourself have lighted on the fact,

Take confirmation of it from this book !

*[Handing him the breviary.]*

Saladin. [*Examining it eagerly.*] Ah, his own hand ! That, too, I know again !

Nathan. They yet know nothing, rests with you alone  
To tell them what this book contains for them.

Saladin. [*Turning the leaves.*] Shall I acknowledge not my brother's children ?

My nephews not acknowledge—not, my children ?

Not recognise them ? Leave them all to you ? [*Aloud again.*

'Tis they ! my Sittah, it is they in truth.

Both of them children of our brother Assad !

[*He runs into their embraces.*

Sittah. [*Following him.*] What do I hear ? 'Twere right no other way !

Saladin. [*To the Templar.*] And, proud one, you must love me after all !

[*To Recha.*

Now I'm in fact what I proposed myself,

Whether you will, or not !

Sittah.

I too ! I too !

Saladin. [*Turning to Templar again.*] My son ! my Assad's son !  
my son, my son !

Templar. I of your blood ! So were those dreams of old

With which they rocked my infancy to sleep

Much more than dreams !

[*Falling at his feet.*

Saladin. [*Raising him up.*] Look at the rascal now !

Somewhat he knew and yet would have allowed

Even me to be his murderer—Ah, but wait !

[*Amidst silent renewal of embraces the*

CURTAIN

*falls.*]